



Creativity Under Confinement

Créativité Sous Confinement



ABOUT00TIME

Edited by Anaïs Nony & Phokeng Setai

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Cover :
Saudade Toxosi, *hu si ku si* (howled out to open up),
Size 5 1/2 x 5 1/2
Black and White printed on White Background



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Edited by Anaïs Nony & Phokeng Setai

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About00Time Press is an open access publishing collective whose mission is to make works of contemporary thought on art, politics, society, and culture freely available worldwide.

About00Time (A00T) is a digital cultural platform whose function is to counteract the preemptive powers of technology that alienate living and non-living beings today. A00T grounds itself in the practice of nurturing forms of cultural work that aim to defy the misanthropic processes of this late-capitalist era. A00T aims to encourage gestures of radical care in contemporary artistic and cultural forms of expression. It does this through mobilising fragments of artistic and cultural life and curatorially situating them in the realms of the corporeal, the digital, and the spiritual world. A00T sees forms of emancipation as being firmly rooted in the kind of freedom afforded to human life and cultural existence. The project of A00T is to invent modalities of existence in our time and space that derive their source independent of the suffocating dynamics of systematised alienation. A00T's vision is anchored in the fluid generativity of the past and wants to use the notion of "becoming past" as a method to boldly shape the "here and now," in the process of finding experimental notions of imaginaries of a collective future. A00T is firmly opposed to the preemptive agents of human alienation and domination and finds it an absolute necessity to invent transcendent relational platforms of cultural exchange in our globally inter-

connected world. To do so, A00T commits to occupying cultural time and enabling the production of forms of awareness that disrupt and reinvent cartographies of power imposed on our real or idealised notions of space, time and human connection. A00T makes use of these modalities to design a digital conduit that is going to carry out the cultural work required to breathe life into collective imaginaries and generate aesthetic practices of transformation.

More at:



ABOUT00TIME



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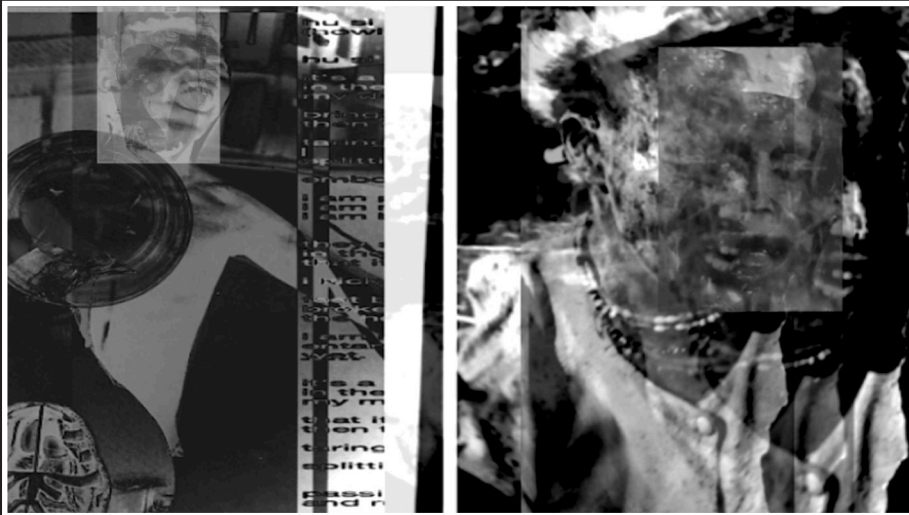
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This book project *Creativity under Confinement* is the first publication of the Digital Cultural Work platform about00time created in 2020. The platform found its name and conception in the Mayibuye Archives of the University of the Western Cape where arts of Black liberation and the anti-apartheid movement were donated by former apartheid activists and organisations who were in solidarity with the cause of putting an end to the apartheid regime. The name About Time was taken from the name of an eponymous exhibition organized by members of the Community Arts Project at Hiddingh campus, University of Cape Town in 1986. Unfortunately, this exhibition only remained opened for one day. It was banned the next day as the Western Cape and most parts of South Africa were placed under a national state of emergency declared to crush dissent erupting for the 10th anniversary of the Soweto uprisings. When we learnt of this story, we were overcome by a strong sense of responsibility and curious commitment to mine this rich and enigmatic archive. We found purpose and drive in telling the human stories of daily resistance against oppression. One that did not see the light of day because of the fascist political status quo of the time. The decision to give About Time (the exhibition) a speculative afterlife came about soon after stumbling on this rich history which quickly led us to meander into more rabbit holes that emerged in our excavation of the archive. Our aim is to historicise significant moments of cultural and creative expression that appear under conditions of repression, constraint and human material and immaterial confinement. This project is a dedication to archiving those lapses that the linearity of time cannot and does not account for. The archive embodies the past and present in its expansive scope, and we believe that the work of culture is to invent and imagine collective futures. The porosity of the archive latches onto the human imagination in a permanent and long-lasting way. Its effects reverberate with a sonorous tone that occupies the creative mind in an invigorating manner.

As editors, we are deeply humbled by the majestic force of the thirty-eight propositions we received from our contributors. We cannot thank our contributors enough for sharing and giving part of their universe to this collective project.

Creativity under Confinement is composed of the artistic and intellectual contributions we received and gathered during the various phases of international lockdown. As first-time editors on such a scale (geographic, artistic, and cultural) we saw in each contribution fluid categories that address differently the notions of self-invention, curation, politics of space, representational practices of bodies and borders relation as well as identity and time, to name just a few themes. The scope of the contributions themselves can be read and interpreted in multiple ways and through numerous modalities. We are immensely grateful to the contributors for this generosity of expression. It is a true testament to the virtue and force of the boundlessness of the individual and collective resource of the human imagination. The contributions are exemplary in that they show quite divergent narratives of human creative agency, punctuated by resilient convulsions and centrifugal expressions of survival during an unprecedented global event. The contributions draw strongly upon an abiding lineage of radicalism that is rooted in the rebelliousness of the human spirit under conditions of pressure and existential discomfort. Our collective ability to imagine ourselves is what makes us people, and informs how we create the process of history. *Creativity under Confinement* is a process of history-making and

archiving of our present moment, in which human life force and the energy of the creative impulse are the apparatuses of writing that are used to imprint the present into the endless annals of time. *Creativity under Confinement* resulted from seeing the importance of recording and archiving human moments through the artistic and critical impulses that occur under difficult circumstances to imagine new alternatives out of them. We are living during an era of uncertainty; creativity is a life force that becomes stimulated under conditions of constraint and is the best barometer of the spirit of the times.



hu si ku si
(howled out to open up)

hu si ku si
it's a high wind ruumblin
in the night.
my daddy told me that.
brings on a sunken feeling,
then tears
taring me
splitting my cup
emboldening my contents towards the ground.
i am pregnant.
i am mad.
i am bleeding.

they say «it's a high wind ruumblin»
in the night.
that it brings on a sunken feeling.
i kick off my covers.
feet blistered
broken.
the horizon is fire red
i am restless.
entangled.
wet.

it's a high wind ruumblin
in the night
my momma told me that it,
that it brings on a sunken feeling.
then tears
taring me
splitting my cup

passing my tears,
and running into the sun.



Cow Mash | 2019 | "molara" | 120 x 130cm | silicone & steel
(photographed by Brent Vredenburg)

What I have been thinking before and more during quarantine:
How do cows feel in isolation? How do cows in breeding farms feel?
Like time does not belong to us. Like we can only make essential
movement that will be for the gain of the company. We will only go
out to graze, to be milked, and on unlucky days to be inseminated.
We will grow according to how the system wants us to grow, naturally

but mostly unnaturally fast.

We will wait and exist in planned movement until we are eaten.

MAKING SENSE IN TIMES OF CONFINEMENT

WE HAVE ANCIENT NEUROLOGICAL
WIRING ALL GEARED FOR THE
VISUAL, I wanna refresh you
with some visual "AIDS" to
explain (make sense) of the / your world

CONSIDER THIS

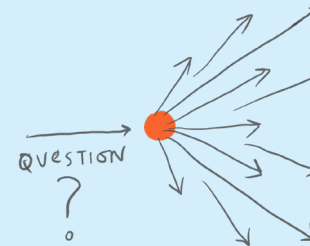
VISUAL THINKING CAN BE
HELPFUL WITH THIS FRAMING



#1 DIVERGENT IMAGES.

OPEN
UP

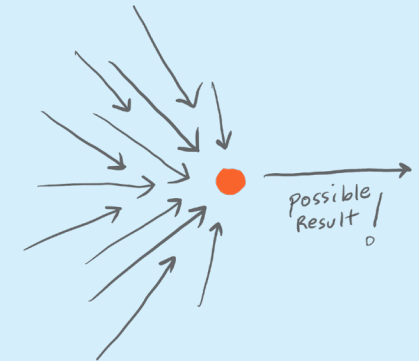
MEANS THAT AN IMAGE
DEPICTS DIFFERENT
APPROACHES OR OPTIONS
→ OFFERS NEW SOLUTIONS
PROMOTES CREATIVITY.



#2 CONVERGENT IMAGES

CLOSE
DOWN

MEANS THAT ONLY
THE ONLY THE RELEVANT ASPECTS
OF A THEORY / APPROACH / PROBLEM
ARE VISUALISED / DEPICTED
These type of visuals helps
us understand complex ideas
by radically condensing them

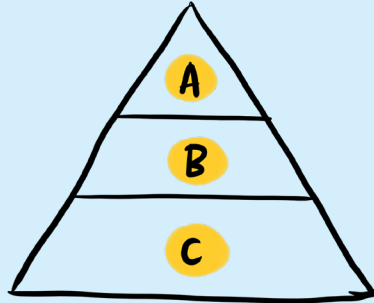


HERE I WANNA
REFRESH / INTRODUCE
YOU TO VISUALS
THAT CAN ASSIST
YOUR THINKING
WITH JUST A FEW
STROKES

"IF YOU CAN IMAGINE IT
AND YOU VISUALIZE IT,
YOU CAN CREATE IT"

PYRAMID

Who tells C what it has to do? OR how does A legitimise its position?



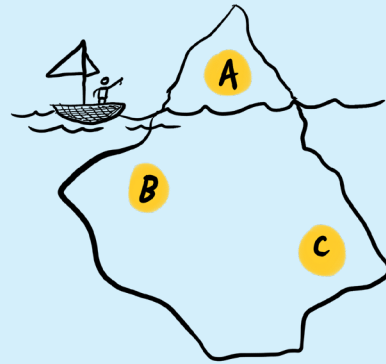
BRIDGE

How do we get from A to C if B is an obstacle



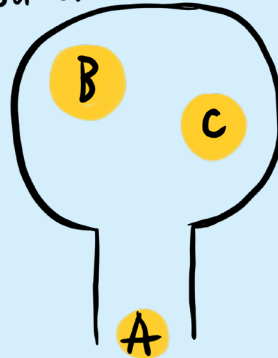
ICEBERG

What forms the basis of A? What is visible? What is invisible?



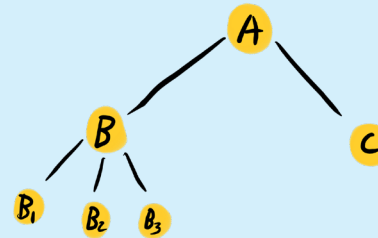
TREE

B AND C grow out of A



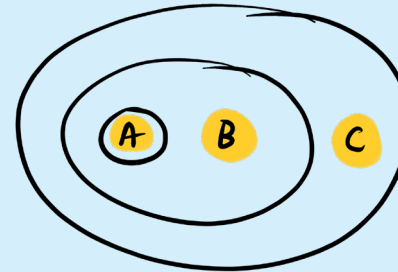
MIND MAP

FROM A, I think B and C.
From B I think B₁, B₂, B₃



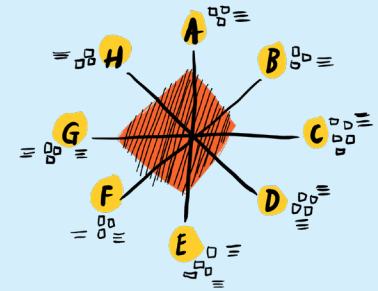
Concentric Circles

A is Part of B is part of C.



RADAR / SPIDER CHART

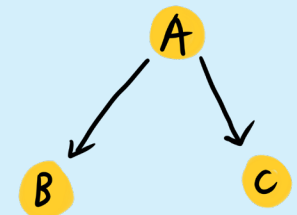
shows several parameters and their characteristics. Taken together, results in a distinctive shape. Good for Comparisons



Flowchart or Family tree

Flowchart: if A, then B or C

Family tree: A results in B, and A results in C.

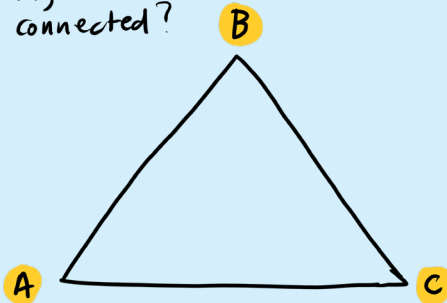


FORCE-Field ANALYSIS

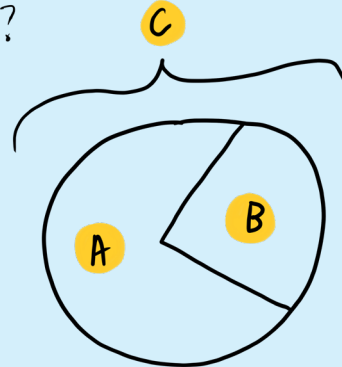
A contradicts B, C agrees with B

**TRIANGLE**

How or why are A, B and C connected?

**PIE chart**

what proportions of A and B make C?

**the WRAP UP...**

PLS KEEP ||
this Quote Alive.0

**The Purpose of
VISUALISATION is
INSIGHT, NOT
PICTURES'**

Ben Shneiderman
computer scientist



Simangaliso Sibiya featuring Nceba Bengu, Ilifa lezithutha, with compliments, 1.2m x 1 m, 2020 (Work In Progress) Mixed Media (Acrylic Paint, Fabric Paint and Pen on Canvas)

Ilifa lezithutha, lidliwa abahlakaniphileyo – IsiZulu Proverb

In his 1996 album, *The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory*, released on the 05th of November almost two months after his death, Tupac Shakur who goes by the alias name Makavelli in this project opens up the album with a song called Bomb First that has a skit of an interview, the interviewer asks some questions on what sounds like a news interview and concludes by saying – Tupac was not available for comments but has sent a statement that goes:

**"It's not about east or west,
It's about Nyiggaz and Bit*hes,
Power and Money,
Riders and Punks,
Which side are you on?"**

I would like to borrow from this quote to try and explain my reflection of what the world is currently going through 'COVID-19 Pandemic' and what the work 'Ilifa lezithutha, Lidliwa abahlakaniphileyo' is attempting to communicate.

It's not about East or West: China and USA

A few months before the covid-19 outbreak in **China Wuhan** according to the media, the world was captured by the leaders from the United States of America, Donald Trump and **Kim Jon Ung** from the Peoples Republic of China on what was called the Trade War between their biggest tech companies Apple Inc. and Huawei. In this trade war, bullish tactics were being used by the West to prove their military and monetary power to scare **the east**. **The east** was not shaken as they responded with as much arrogance as **the west** was willing to spew but went an extra mile by proving that they don't need the west to function, introducing innovation upon innovation with their ability to mass produce.

On the top left corner of the work, the United States of America is symbolised by the fighter jets in white flying over red skies towards dark skies and emitting white smoke. In this illustration, I make a conclusion that the role of the U.S in this whole One World Order is death and destruction by what they inherited and are well known for WAR.

On the top right corner there is a Ferris wheel with three big stars which symbolises the Chinese flag but it also talks to how the east is running the world with their ability to mass produce the needs of the world, with this ability they tend to attract young nations, especially from Africa offering them free rides but we all know there is no free lunch in this world.

It's about Niggas and Bitches: Royalty and Capitalism

According to the website thegnosticdread.com the word Negus was the title given to the King of Abyssinia (Ethiopia), from Amharic "negush" meaning 'king', stemming from "nagasha" which means 'he forced, ruled'. Nagasha is also not related to the word naga and naga is not related to the word nigga. History teaches us that life began in Africa, Ethiopia to be exact, the only country that was never colonised in the continent and was largely ruled by woman such as The Queen of Sheba, who is mentioned in **the bible**. **Queen Candice**, Empress of Ethiopia and General-in-chief of the army **that that** was waiting for Alexander the "great" to attack Ethiopia but decided otherwise, after seeing her army waiting for him in 332BC. Last but not least is the controversial image of queen Elizabeth II and prince Phillip bowing before Empress Menen Asfaw and her husband Emperor Ras Tafari Makonnen Woldemikael Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. As far as it was known the Queen and Prince have never bowed to anyone before. Ethiopia was never the same again with sanctions against them from the rest of the world caused major economic strains and poverty.

Bitch, literally means a female dog, is a judgemental slang word for a person usually a woman- who is quarrelsome, unreasonable, malicious, a control freak, rudely intrusive or aggressive. When applied to a man, bitch is a derogatory term for a subordinate. In 1965 John F. Kennedy was quoted saying "My Father always told me that all

businessmen were sons of bitches, but I never believed it till now" as a reaction to news that U.S steel was raising prices by \$6 per ton.

In the middle of the work there is a black woman symbolising the Negus holding a walking stick and an orb. The walking stick with the Zimbabwean birds on them belonged to a Sanusi, Healer and Artist u Baba Credo Vusamazulu Mutwa who unfortunately passed on just days before the county went on **lockdown**, **this** is to pay respect to him and maybe just maybe a prophesy that the next Sanusi is/will be a woman. The orb is a symbolic of the holder of the divine knowledge that she holds with her and is a representation of the one who has complete dominion over all being both the spiritual and physical realm. The orb is also a symbol of the Sun Ra and its powers. She has her back against the airs how and Ferris wheel that are causing the sky to be red and focused on moving towards a new reality with all the baggage of patriarchy weighing heavily around her body. This woman is a symbol of hope for a better future.

Also in the middle there is a metaphor of a royal crown, symbolising a very belligerent, unreasonable, malicious, control freak, rudely intrusive and aggressive queen and her subordinates.

Power and Money: Oil and Domination

History always remembers June 06 1967 when Israel enters into a conflict with Egypt, Syria and Jordan in what is known as the **six day war**. The Arab minister called for an embargo on countries friendly to Israel. In response Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Libya and Algeria banned oil shipments to the United States, United Kingdom and West Germany. This decision affected the United States immensely even though they had enough reserves up until 1970. This completely reorganised the flow of oil around the world marking a turning point in the global oil markets. In 1973 again the "oil weapon" was unleashed much more powerful than in 1967 when Arab countries cut off oil supply and created a shortage and rising prices around the world, petrol lines in many countries and perhaps most importantly a new understanding of the role oil could play in geopolitics. The U.S reserves were dropping sharply and they were no longer the security margin in the oil market, this however created a response from international companies to look for more exploration and products elsewhere. But it is in 1941 after the start of World War 2 and the United State embarks on a nationwide rationing plan that includes petrol vouchers and limiting the driving speed to 35km/h in an effort to boost their oil productions.

At the bottom, the crown rests on a blue and white cushion that symbolises the country of **Israel**, **during** World War I and II the state of Israel or the Rothschild family was accused of sponsoring both sides of the war for profit, they have always been seen as an invisible government all over the world that craves for a one world domination. What would stop them in sponsoring both sides of the war this time around in what is quickly becoming **a scrambles for Africa part two**.

Raiders and Punks: Dancing Presidents and Singing Youth

Post 1994 in South Africa, one thing common about our presidents is their dancing skills. It's like a signature for scoring cheap political points locally and internationally. First it was Rolihlahla Mandela with the **Madiba dance** that went viral in the country, then followed by Thabo Mbeki who seemed quite happy dancing at the Zion Cristian Church (ZCC) **every other Easter weekend**. Well I will have to give it to Gedlehlelekisa Zuma with his traditional dance moves and extra ordinary singing that sparked interest in me as to why the South African leadership in the highest office like to dance, besides the fact **that we as Abantu like to sing and dance for everything occasion that we do**. The latest to follow the long tradition of dancing presidents is **Matamela Ramaphosa current president of the country** and the dancing is not just limited to the ruling party we have also witnessed opposition party leaders such as Sello Malema from the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Hellen Zille from the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Mmusi Maimane former leader of the D.A. The one question I cannot shake off is at whose expense? Who is the object that these raiders have attached their straps on for the joy ride?

Initially these riders were punks in their younger days as youth formations fighting apartheid, economic inequality and the hypocrisy of the system of the time but along the way began to straddle the fence. They refused to take a side and make commitments to the people who put them into the leadership **positions** hence 26 years later the country cannot even produce simple face masks. In 1994 when our parents got their freedom, I believe "my point of view" we had nothing to lose as a people, therefore we should have taken everything they stole from us without fear or favour but we danced to **Mafikizolo's Diba Diba, then** in the second president between 1998 – 2006 when the ruling party had two thirds majority needed to take land and redistribute to the people, we listened to a great poem and danced away during the Easter weekend. I won't lie I was one of the die-hard supporters of Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, despite the allegations he was facing I still wanted him to be the president, **he is cultured I though**. We danced to his signature tune and struggle song Umshini wami as the country was being looted and almost got hijacked by greedy business people who have since fled the country leaving the former president to cleaning up. Like the clowns in the middle of the painting our leadership has been ridding and 'punking' for the past 26 years, **we** hardly recognise their humanity that they once stood for, it is as if they are wearing a mask and performing to a higher power and an audience that does not know that they are in the grandstand and are only realising now once the shit has hit the fan.

Which side are you on?

I think this is the question everyone on the African continent should be critically asking themselves, which side am I on. We cannot unfortunately afford to straddle this time **around**, we should be **asking, do** we really need the East and the West or do they need us? Are we Negus of Africa or Bitches of the world? We have seen

throughout the continent that power corrupts even the most patriotic fighters of colonisation, **Robert Mugabe Is a classic** example of how easily money changes revolutionaries into puppets. Do we still want to ride the neo-colonialism bubble sold to us as a new world order or the fourth industrial revolution and get punked by the sons of bitches to use J.F. Kenedy's term, who want to dominate the continent at whatever cost? I don't know but what I do know is that there is a mass awakening in the continent. We have finally reached a breaking point, we have realised how evil the world has been to us. We have learned that the world looks at Ubuntu as an ideology than a way of life. The visitors who we once welcomed into our homes have kicked us out into the cold, raped and killed our parents. They have demonised our cultures and religions and rewrote our histories to fit their agendas.

We all have our higher self and lower self and it's up to the individual which one they manifest in healing themselves as we become the healer of others in the process, there is no more sacred work than this and Until the great mother Africa is put back on her throne, there will be no balance in the world.



Zanoxolo Sylvester Mqeku. The No fly Zones of Shawu. Ink and Ball point pen on Fabriano 350mm x 250mm 2020. R1800 (Unframed)

No fly zone

As part of LOCKDOWN the group project by FreeState Art Collective I created The No fly Zones of Shawu, depictions of abstract architectural structures deployed alongside the landscape. I was interested in the concept of history presented as fiction.

Right now, in South Africa and globally, a majority of physical functions are suspended or slowed down to an almost controlled state of hibernation.

The No fly Zones of Shawu is a world that has recently emerged along the pathways of the human collective unconscious. In this particular world, monasteries and fortresses crop out of unspecified mountain peaks across the African landscape, the lines of written public history that subvert the colonial notions of Terra Incognita. The world as our habitat has become a closed off zone, streets and roads are empty, human movement is limited, and human experience insists to be directed inwards, off the surveillance grid. In a 2014 TED talk connected but alone Sherry Turkle explores human contact along the imaginary lines of internet communications, the rabbit hole of emoticons, breaking news, likes, dislikes, searchboxes, direct messaging options and retweets, the simulated daydream characters of a battery powered realm of otherwise gothic isolation.

Whether by imagination or technology, the post-postcoloniality of our immediate environment insists on the redefining of things like social engineering, boundary, isolation, and distance.



Manyaku Mashilo, Back and Forth on the Here and Now, 2020, Mixed Media Collage, ED 1 of 3 +2 AP

The Biographical landscape

We make maps to mark where we have journeyed from. Contemporary South African artist, Manyaku Mashilo's work explores these complex associations with journey and home. Her abstract drawn lines and forms are reminiscent of aerial views of hills, slopes, peaks and valleys. In her depictions they gather as traces or surges of energy, cartographies which identify the dimensions of time through the earth's depths and curves.

To confront space as Mashilo does is to map the distributions of space and its relationships. For Mashilo, the titles of her work represent verbs, as sites of action in the present time to follow and enact. Her superimposition of figures highlights nongeographical contexts into the representation of the landscape, articulating the politicised nature of land within the narrative of blackness in a postcolonial and post-apartheid reality. Working from a series of Jürgen Schadeberg's black and white photographs from the 1950's, Mashilo tracks the multiple journeys of black

bodies during the violent urbanization of Johannesburg, the 'City of Gold' and the migration of black people in South Africa. The enmeshed figures perform a multiplication of mappings which piece together dimensions of time, place and space, offering the land and the body as the source of a complex question of the multi-temporal. Loosened from one cartography their figures penetrate through the surface of the landscape, into its multiple dimensions of time to chart a celestial mapping. Are they dreamed spaces, imagined by the artist? Their traversing of the constellations highlights our perspective and our vision, expanding on earth as a material metaphor for a spiritual relationship.

A memory the artist refers to, Mpogo (a communal prayer to honour the ancestors and address something troubling the community) is performed through a collective prayer in song and dance. In this movement, the prayer originates from the ground upwards, disturbing the earth and bringing up dust. Shaping the topography.

While the epochs are measured by spikes in the geology Mashilo's cartographies map the ancestral landscape which allow the figure to expand into their lineage. The celestial figures she imposes honor the dead and the living to resonate in ancestral time. During the mpogo, the dust lifts and spreads as the stars spread through the sky and illuminate routes and paths through time.

An Age of Our Own Making

The Anthropocene, a geological epoch with humans at the center of time, uses our human activity as its tool of measurement. Our scales, thermometers, clocks and other tools of measurement implicate ourselves in our view of the earth and what its many worlds should look like. In a landscape defined by illogical and historically policed borders, black bodies are exacerbated and compressed into the landscape. These measurements are our world making.

Kathryn Yusoff in her book *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2019) attempts to rewrite the origins of the Anthropocene, describing the relationship to fossils and materialisms as a 'white geology' (Yusoff, 2019) defined by the histories of colonial and industrial extractionist philosophies. She states: "to be included in the 'we' of the Anthropocene is to be silenced by a claim to a universalism that fails to notice its subjugations", if there is a 'white geology' what may a 'black geology' be based on? How can we think about our humanity as a birthmark of identity on an environment? How do we open new definitions of time and the environment to consider the spiritual and the ancestral as somatic forms?

"Addressing origin stories is not just about making an alternative... it is to be attentive to what histories of the earth provide a break in analysis and narratives of materials relations and languages of description that have colonized it, and to begin to make histories that launch a praxis for an insurgent geology into being. This is where materiality is used to establish the presentness of Blackness as an obligation to the present, to counter its erasure through a poetry that cuts into coloniality as counter aesthetic (Brand 2017b). To this end, I write not toward White Geology but toward the 'nonevent' of a Billion Black Anthropocenes" (Yusoff, 2019) Each lockdown morning we invite a new day and prepare ourselves for isolation,

another day of waiting. We are surrounded by the dimensions of time, in the anxiety of no time and the frustration of too much time, we live within the dissonance of the memory of a life we once knew. We become frustrated by time as if it was made from our own hands.

Reflecting on the generation of the 1950's, as our elders are placed in a precarious position in our society, remembering a 'past' South Africa of restricted movements, within homes and areas where basic resources and human needs are lacking, how do we prioritize their care and how do we use art making to challenge the social death experienced by many black South Africans?

Professor Francesca Ferrando writes, "forced erasement of private and public histories, makes it crucial to keep the past and present in the visualization of desirable futures." Unlike the maps of memories of what is lost, Mashilo renders the figures with prominence and foregrounds their links to the land. Even in dust there is power and memory.

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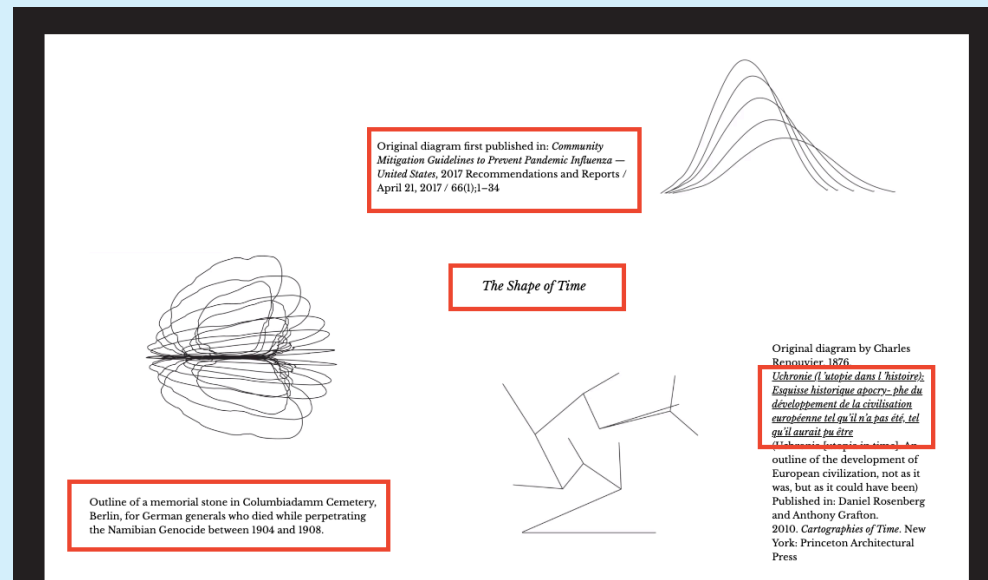
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all of my elders seemed undisturbed
by these new ways of being.
at times it calms me.
and then it scares me.
I remember.
they survived bull connor
and the water
but might not survive this.





“I Hope This Email Finds You”

On one hand, I organise a weekly get together of friends and colleagues from different parts of the world. Every week I tell them that the hangouts are being organized because I believe it is important for people to keep in touch and know that they are not alone in whatever they are going through; and at the end of the call, I make everyone create a playlist. This is not the truth. It is a half-truth. The truth is that I organise these hangouts because it keeps me sane, and gives me something to look forward to every week. I organise the hangouts for selfish reasons and not altruistic ones. I organise them because outside this call, I spend every day either worrying while working. How do you respond to emails in such a time? How do send email to people from different ends of the world when you are uncertain if the email would even meet them at all?

My life in the past few weeks have been filled with playlists and emails. The emails ask, “Are you there?” “How are you coping?” and the playlists respond, “Yes I am.” “This is how.”

Let me share these with you.

90 Degrees by Yazmin Lacey
A Change is Gonna Come by Sam Cooke
Amazing Grace by Andrea Bocelli;
Basa Basa by Homowo
Basimanyana by Vusi Mahlasela
Best Believe by Party Next Door ft Rihanna
Bigger by Beyonce
Blinding Lights by The Weeknd
Born Tired by Jhene Aiko
Change is Gonna come by Seal
Changes by Tupac
Duduke by Simi
Evergreen by Yebba
Fighting For by Roots Manuva
Fire by Ayo (ft. Youssoupha)
Fix you by Coldplay
Forever by Chike (ft. M.I.)
Get On Up by James Brown
Highway to Hell by AC/DC
I Am Easy to Find by The National
Jamaica Farewell by Caetano Veloso
Jerusalem by Master KG (ft. Nomcebo Zikode)
Juba Juba by Yusef Lateef
Kpata Kpata by DJ Obi (ft. CDQ)
Landing in London by 3 Doors Down
L'Escalier by The Pirouettes
Lonely by M.I. Abaga
Adios by Benjamin Clementine
Lover of the Light by Mumford and Sons
Marry by Teni
(...)↵

Me You I by The Cavemen
Nectar by Raveena
Om Shanti by Alice Coltrane
One Love by Bob Marley
Orphans by Coldplay
Romans holiday by The National
Sema Milele by Gilad
Somersault by Zero 7
Soukora by Ali Farka Toure and Ry Cooder
Soul Rebel by Bob Marley
Stay with Me by Sam Smith
Sun-El by Sonini
Sweetheart Come by Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds
Tadieu Bone by Ismael Lo
Tempo by Lizzo (ft. Missy Elliot)
The Fear by Lily Allen
Timshel by Mumford and sons
To Be Human by Marina
Too Young to Burn by Sonny
Try and Try by Cleo Sol
Umlilo by Dj Zinhle
Up&Up by Coldplay
Wake Up by Clara Hill
Want It Back by Guts
What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong
Where You Lead, I'll Follow by Carole King
Winner by TMXO
Woman by Brymo
You Can't Steal My Joy by Ezra Collective
You Will Never Walk Alone by Marcus Mumford (cover)
Youssou Ndour by Dip Doundou Guiss



1

Les Territoires Occupés

Du temps de la conquête

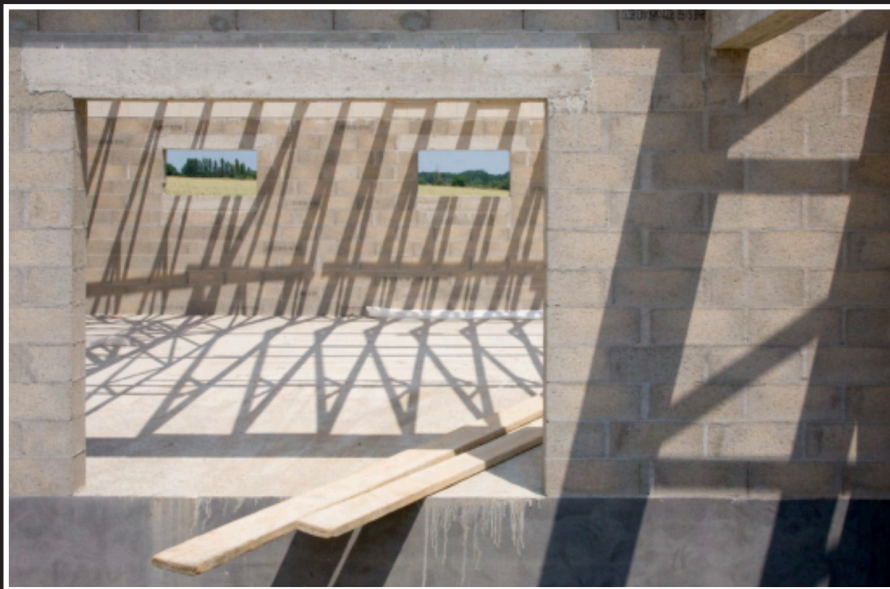
Il y a un proverbe chinois qui dit : « Bâti ta maison et quand elle sera terminée, quitte-la. » Ici des familles de « rurbains » s'implantent de manière durable (ou espèrent que ce le soit vraiment), et les maisons éclosent promptement. La mutation « civilisatrice » du paysage est en marche. L'occupation des espaces « vides » gagne rapidement sur le terrain des opérations. A cet endroit-là il y a urgence.

La lutte pour un temps raccourci y est effective. A peine croqués, juste esquissés, les des seins des différents protagonistes de cette tragédie sont lisibles un peu partout. Les géo mètres balisent pendant que les maçons coulent déjà les fondations d'un avenir visible ment sans résistances possibles.

1 — *Territoires occupés* #4328, (100 x 100 cm)
tirage sur papier baryté fine art contrecollé sur
dibond et monté sur châssis aluminium, 2008



2



3

Bientôt des corps trouveront abri ici en ces demeures, à cet endroit même où la plaine n'était jadis que sauvages dangers pour l'homme.

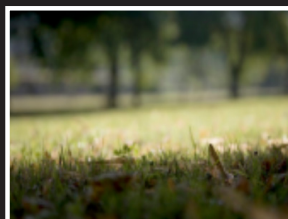
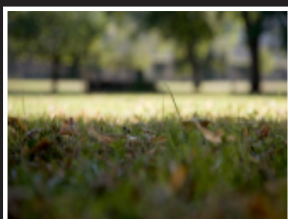
2 – Territoires occupés Diptyque #8801-03
(120×80 cm) ×2
tirages sur papier baryté fine art contrecollés
sur dibond et montés sur châssis aluminium, 2007
3 – Territoires occupés #8774
(320×180 cm, 120×90 cm, 90×60 cm, 70×45 cm)
tirages sur papier baryté fine art contrecollés sur
dibond et montés sur châssis aluminium, 2008



4



5



6



7

L'insecte et le sacré

Cette série est constituée d'un triptyque, d'un diptyque et de treize images. Elle répondait à une commande-résidence de 6 mois à l'Abbaye de Noirlac (Cher) réalisée en 2011 et soutenue par le Conseil départemental du Cher.

Série éditée aux éditions Le Réalgar sous l'ISBN: 979-10-91365-23-9, Texte de Laurent Cachard titré *L'insecte et le sacré* à l'occasion de l'exposition « De deux choses l'une » Galerie Le Réalgar, Saint Etienne, janvier 2016.

« Ce qui n'est pas sacré leur est profane. Dans la construction, tout renvoie à l'harmonie perdue, celle d'un désert qu'on a occupé. Les pierres sont nues, les colonnes se terminent brusquement, coupées, transversalement. Je ne sais que ce que les vitraux renvoient au sol au moment où les rayons traversent l'édifice. Ce moment exact, qui ne laisse à personne le droit de décréter qu'il lui est supérieur. Cet instant qui marque, pour moi dont l'existence est insignifiant, à leur échelle de valeur et de temps, l'idée que je ne reverrai rien du dehors, ni les miens ni les herbes dont je me suis extrait. Sans regret: une notion humaine, puisque rien de ce qui nous arrive n'est soumis au hasard »

Laurent Cachard in *L'insecte et le sacré*, 2016

4— Diptyque, « Noirlac, L'insecte et le sacré #9083-86 », 2009

L'insecte et le sacré, éditions Le Réalgar, Texte Laurent Cachard, ISBN: 979-10-91365-23-9

5— « Noirlac, L'insecte et le sacré #0587 », 2009

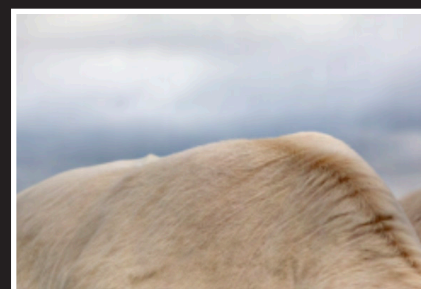
L'insecte et le sacré, éditions Le Réalgar, Texte Laurent Cachard, ISBN: 979-10-91365-23-9

6— Triptyque, « Le verger de Noirlac, L'insecte et le sacré #0612-13-14 », 2009

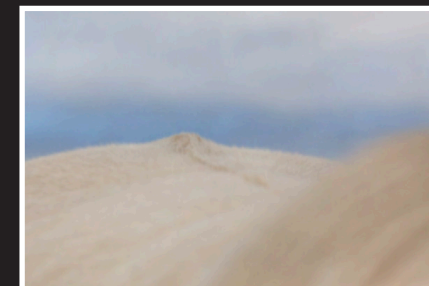
L'insecte et le sacré, éditions Le Réalgar, Texte Laurent Cachard, ISBN: 979-10-91365-23-9

7— « Noirlac, L'insecte et le sacré #0630 », 2009

L'insecte et le sacré, éditions Le Réalgar, Texte Laurent Cachard, ISBN: 979-10-91365-23-9



8



9



10

Paysages

«Je me demandais à quel âge on devient un sage, ou si on l'est dès la naissance et qu'ensuite vient la décadence? Peut-on devenir un animal si l'on fixe à ses pieds des fers ?»

Mansfield.TYA, *Animal*

8 à 10 — Paysage - réalisées dans le Boischaud
sud - 2012



11



12

Les intimités

Un souvenir. Séjour dans une clairière de la brousse équatoriale. (Polaroïd). Nous photographions un campement, une famille, un visage. Nous étions chez les pygmées ; leurs réactions ; frayeur tout d'abord. Nous osions saccager leur retraite, nous nous emparions de leur nudité pudique, nous les emprisonnions dans notre géométrie luciférienne, nous volions leurs talismans feuillus, nous violions leur décrochage tribal, nous nous installions dans leur repli. Puis la magie de l'image opérait et nos imaginations claniques fusionnaient dans l'emmêlement du don. Ces cénobites de la canopée entonnaient polyphonies et psalmodies émeraude tout en nous invitant à partager manioc et râble de singe. Nous avions meurtri l'horizon totémique de leur tradition ; ils nous offraient l'éclosion bigarrée d'un nouveau troc coutumier. J'ai vu la photographie ouvrir à même l'écriture d'un pacte avec le réel. On dit que Félix Fénéon, lorsqu'il rencontrait une peinture qui le bouleversait, rougissait de plaisir et se taisait. Et bien voilà ! Je suis un Fénéon pygmée devant « Les intimités ». Je ne chante pas, c'est plus prudent, mais je m'empourpre et me retire anachorétiquement aux confins de mon désert méditatif après avoir commis le péché de gourmandise durant le face-à-face avec ton oeuvre.

Bravo, Jean. Maintiens le cap. Poursuis ton voyage vers la belle intelligence.

Joël Frémiot

11 – *Les Intimités* #8649-64-67, Tryptique, tirages barytés - (120x90cm) x3 contrecollés sur dibond et montés sur châssis aluminium, 2011
12 – *Les Intimités* #8623, tirage baryté, 120x90 cm contrecollé sur dibond et monté sur châssis aluminium, 2011



13



14

Sous le socle du monde

Sous le socle du Monde est inspiré par deux oeuvres : « le Socle du Monde » de Piero Manzoni réalisé en 1961, et la photographie, « Le Sexe de la Terre » de Jean Frémiot réalisée en 2000. Sous le socle du Monde essaie de formuler une critique esthétique de l'agriculture industrielle en utilisant comme matière première visuelle les machines agricoles. Celles-ci sont comme des armes de guerre à l'œuvre d'une destruction productiviste violente. Nous pouvons parler ici d'une certaine violation des terres arables.

13 – Images extraites de *Sous le socle du monde* film photographique réalisé par Jean Frémiot, 2014
14 – *Le Sexe de la Terre*, photographie de Jean Frémiot, 2000

Notes de bas de page

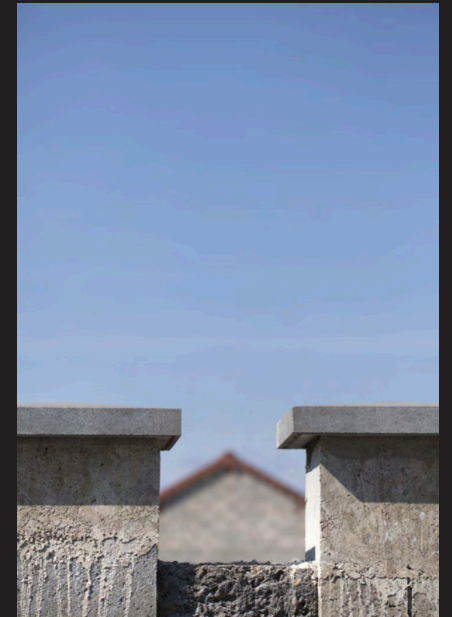
La genèse de ce projet remonte à 2014. C'est à cette époque que j'entame la réflexion sur ma relation à la lecture et à l'écriture photographiques. Là naît l'idée des Notes de bas de pages ; j'allais alors commencer à annoter, à gloser en marge de mes lectures. Ces prises de notes nourrissent désormais ce travail qui est en cours. Mais il est maintenant temps pour moi de passer à l'acte de photographier comme geste d'écriture du corps dans l'espace. Cet environnement physique, réel, influence depuis toujours mes réflexions sur le territoire : une certaine proximité avec/de la capitale. C'est aussi toute une population qui est concernée par cette proximité, ce voisinage ; c'est de ça que je veux traiter : le voisinage.



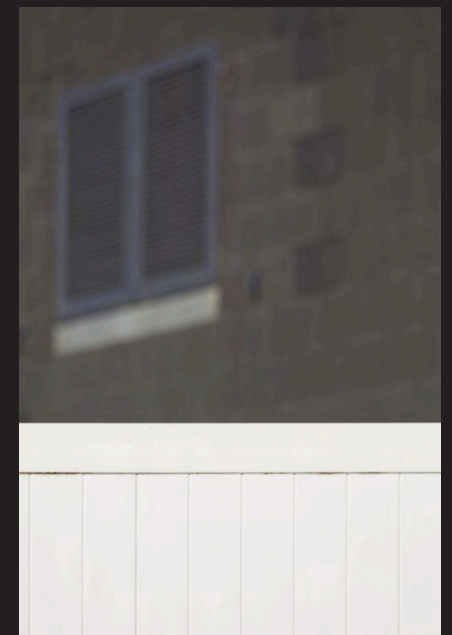
15



16



17



18

15— Notes de bas de page #1288, réalisée aux alentours de Bourges, 2014.
 16— Notes de bas de page #8409, réalisée aux alentours de Bourges en 2014.
 17— Notes de bas de page #9790, réalisée à Gien en 2018.
 18— Notes de bas de page #9813, réalisée à Gien en 2018.

Pour illustrer ce sujet, je dois citer Fernand Deligny dans *L'Arachnéen* et autres textes. Cette expérience de vie commune dans les Cévennes avec des enfants autistes m'inspire beaucoup pour ce projet des Notes de bas de page. Il y aurait, selon Fernand Deligny, comme un langage, un vocabulaire, qui se tramerait dans les déplacements de ces enfants.

«L'art, les bords... et le dehors

L'art... Les bords

Où se voit, dans le dictionnaire, que ce mot qui parlait de bordure en est arrivé à évoquer le navire lui même. Monter à bord, ça se dit. Reste la mer, qui serait le dehors.

Et reste à se demander si l'œuvre d'art ne tiendrait pas du poisson volant, de ce dehors qui n'est pas de même nature que celle qui nous est conférée par la domestication symbolique et nous embarque dans ce qui peut se dire l'histoire. Si le poisson volant paraît saugrenu, rien n'empêche de penser que malgré l'incessant calfatage, le dehors suinte et que vient faire cette mare qui reflète le visage de qui regarde et fait miroir sans l'être ? (.) Ça se dit que la mer miroite alors que personne ne s'y voit. [...]

Où est l'auteur, dans toutes ces manigances ? Il disparaît, effacé comme s'efface l'idée que l'art c'est représenter. J'allais dire qu'il s'agit d'exposer ce qui est souvent vrai, mais alors, la musique ? Il s'agirait plutôt d'accorder, mot dont on ne sait pas trop s'il s'origine de coeur ou de corde. Mais alors, il faudrait qu'accorder signifie créer un accord, et non pas un consentement, une conformité, mais plutôt une discordance d'où vont vibrer des rapports de fréquence.

Le coeur est dedans, bordé, borné.

Il a ses limites qui ont une histoire.

La corde est dehors.»

Fernand Deligny in *L'Arachnéen* et autres textes

Préambule, avertissement

Pour expliquer ce projet des Notes de bas de pages je m'inspire et prends comme fil conducteur ici le travail de Tiziana Villani, puisqu'il sera question pour moi de traiter de psychogéographies urbaines, des corps, des territoires, de leurs paysages et de l'influence des technologies de déplacements sur les habitants de cette région. Il sera question de «plans», de plis et d'écritures, mais aussi de voyages, de «bagnole» et de nouvelles voies qu'il reste à inaugurer. Pour ce faire, j'ai besoin de décrire le(s) mode(s) opératoire(s) que je souhaite adopter et les voies que j'emprunterai. Mes références sont multiples et embrassent des champs qui peuvent paraître disparates, mais qui, cristallisés par les images que je souhaite réaliser, devront des siner et/ou écrire une expérimentation en mouvement. Parce que mon acte photographique nécessite une mise à l'épreuve de l'ensemble de l'entreprise, c'est tout une chaîne de production de l'image qui s'enclenche ici, de l'élaboration première à l'acte de

monstration. Il m'est donc indispensable d'embrasser l'ensemble de ce paysage dès le tout début ; c'est-à-dire hic et nunc, dans la rédaction même de ce projet.

La genèse de ce projet remonte à 2014. C'est à cette époque que j'entame la réflexion sur ma relation à la lecture et à l'écriture photographiques. Là naît l'idée des Notes de bas de pages ; j'allais alors commencer à annoter, à gloser en marge de mes lectures. Ces prises de notes nourrissent désormais ce travail qui est en cours. Mais il est maintenant temps pour moi de passer à l'acte de photographier comme geste d'écriture du corps dans l'espace. Cet environnement physique, réel, influence depuis toujours mes réflexions sur le territoire : une certaine proximité avec/de la capitale. C'est aussi toute une population qui est concernée par cette proximité, ce voisinage ; c'est de ça que je veux traiter : le voisinage.

Par exemple, l'influence du projet Grand Paris va au-delà de ses frontières strictement administratives, de l'autre côté, au-delà. Il bave, déborde et touche déjà ses régions limitrophes en impactant les politiques locales, en orientant durablement les axes qui dessinent et transforment les paysages tant physiques que mentaux. Il façonne l'esprit des habitants comme une matrice sourde et bien peu clairvoyante. Voilà pour quoi je souhaite porter mon attention sur ces transformations et sur ce qui, depuis déjà bien longtemps, fabrique une certaine notion de périphérie. Ce qui est autour ne serait-il pas comme la peau d'un corps sans organe ? Ne serait-il pas possible d'aller y caresser l'idée qu'un regard, à condition qu'il soit partagé, puisse participer à ces transformations ? N'y a-t-il pas de l'histoire qui se trame là, du mythe qui s'écrit, comme une archéologie du futur qui s'aggrave à un présent incertain ?

Comme je l'avais fait en 2007-2009 pour les Territoires occupés, je veux établir un mode opératoire adapté à ce projet des Notes de bas de page. Celui-ci se construira véritablement avec la réalisation des prises de vue et se terminera (ou non) au moment de la monstration des images sous forme de l'édition d'un livre et de la réalisation de tirages d'exposition de grande taille. Les dimensions et proportions de ces tirages devront suivre une règle qui me conduit à adopter une méthodologie particulière dès la prise de vue. Il est question d'échelle 1, de grandeur nature du premier plan, de corps à corps du spectateur face à l'image tirée, ainsi que de ma place vis-à-vis du sujet que j'aurai à photographier. La distance avec le sujet devra être finement jaugée. La mise au point ainsi que la profondeur de champ qui en découle sont les outils de (d'in)visibilité qui questionnent le réel - comme une forme d'écriture de soi, comme une pratique d'un territoire à traverser, à éprouver, à consumer. Le sujet photographié, celui que je cadre, et celui que le spectateur regarde, le tirage d'exposition, se doivent d'être à bonne distance et donc de justes dimensions. Ces photographies, une fois tirées, seront par conséquent toutes de tailles différentes, mais de mêmes proportions. Réalisées avec le même boîtier (un appareil à haute résolution) et alignées dans l'espace d'exposition sur la ligne déterminée par le haut de la réserve du bas de l'image - cette zone nette que j'appelle la note de bas de page - ces images figureront comme sur une page de texte. Aussi, le choix du papier des tirages d'exposition se devra d'être judicieusement pensé pour rendre au mieux les différents flous d'arrière-plan afin de se rapprocher autant que faire se peut de l'idée d'une peau. Le choix de tirages jet d'encre Epson digigraphie fine art réalisés sur papier baryté par le tireur qui connaît mon travail depuis près de vingt ans me paraît adéquat.

Introduction par la station RER de bout de ligne

Corps et territoire partagent une condition singulière et commune: celle d'un devenir suspendu entre la persistance du passé et les sollicitations d'un présent-futur influencé par les technologies. L'enchevêtrement de relations, d'affects, d'échanges sociaux et économiques qui concernent autant les corps que le territoire se déploie sur un plan articulé que l'on doit définir en tant qu'environnement. Il faut toutefois s'arrêter un instant sur le concept d'environnement en raison des nombreuses définitions qu'il a reçues, pour confronter celles-ci avec l'acception que je propose ici.

Traditionnellement, le concept d'environnement a été marqué par l'emploi qu'en ont fait la géographie d'abord et par la suite les diverses sciences sociales. L'environnement est cependant une dimension, un horizon, un plan bien plus ample qui, loin d'être homogène, prévoit une infinité d'espaces et de modalités qui forgent inlassablement l'existence. L'environnement a à faire avec la vie, avec les corps qui le constituent, avec les transformations qui le traversent.

Actuellement, la complication et le degré de variabilité qu'ont atteint les processus de transformation, enclenchés surtout par le renouvellement incessant des innovations technologiques, demandent un saut de paradigme. En d'autres termes, nous devons interroger tout ce qui arrive et se déploie en ayant recours à une pluralité d'outils théoriques qui ne sont pas uniquement interdisciplinaires, mais qui doivent réussir à dégager, à travers une analyse attentive du langage, la nature des nouveaux dispositifs. Il s'agit de dispositifs non seulement de pouvoir au sens foucauldien du terme, mais encore de communication, de gouvernement des corps, des passions et du territoire comme expression créative du vivre quotidien. En ce sens, comme de nombreux chercheurs l'ont déjà remarqué, on ne peut pas réduire le territoire à sa cartographie. Le territoire se constitue de façon unitaire avec les corps qui l'habitent, puisqu'il est un tissu de processus souvent contradictoires, d'instances qui indiquent les plis d'un conflit qui oppose à la loi du contrôle les instances de libération. Ces dernières élaborent des modalités d'installation, des langages, des mélanges qui indiquent concrètement les alternatives nécessaires à un système qui a élevé son propre credo bureaucratique et technologique au rang de dogme.

L'environnement est caractérisé par une extrême plasticité, une performativité qui nous révèle à présent comme jamais comment on en est arrivé à un moment d'écart particulier: celui de l'accélération. Et même s'il est vrai que toute révolution économique a mobilisé son propre changement en imposant d'extraordinaires accélérations temporelles, celle dont nous sommes en train de nous occuper indique une nouveauté qui lui est propre: la métamorphose et la numérisation de l'espace tel qu'on l'avait entendu jusque-là engendre une distanciation dangereuse des êtres vis-à-vis des choses qui les entourent. Bien entendu, ce mouvement de tendance ne signifie pas que l'espace concret et matériel du quotidien n'existe plus, c'est plutôt la perception que nous en avons qui a changé et avec elle son usage.

Le territoire (et encore plus le devenir urbain du territoire actuel), et le corps précaire à durée limitée sont capables d'adaptations extraordinaires et de résistances tout aussi fortes. Ils entrent en conflit avec le corps biotechnologisé dont on fait actuellement la promotion et avec des espaces en perpétuelle mutation. Il ne s'agit pas tant d'en évaluer l'augmentation des prestations et de la durée dans le cadre d'un scénario où l'on prêche la perfectibilité infinie, que de comprendre en

même temps la méconnaissance de la fameuse interrogation spinozienne: «Nul ne sait ce que peut un corps».

Comme le pense Jean-François Lyotard, ville et philosophie en sont arrivées à la nécessité que l'on en re-pense le style puisque **«la ville a débordé dans la mégalozone. Celle-ci ne possède ni intérieur, ni extérieur, car ceux-ci sont unis comme une périphérie. De la même façon, la métaphysique constituée de l'urbanisation, à travers le concept d'un au-dehors de la pensée, semble rencontrer son propre motif quand cet au-dehors, nature, réalité, dieu ou homme se dissout sous l'effet de la critique»**.

Nous assistons à une véritable mutation épistémologique qui demande à ce que soient réexaminées toutes les catégories et tous les concepts qui caractérisent les rapports entre les sujets et la polis. Les concepts et catégories traditionnellement utilisés pour décrire les transformations urbaines et sociales doivent être repensés en fonction de la dilatation articulée et complexe que constitue le devenir urbain du territoire.

J'ajoute qu'il est même nécessaire de redessiner ces espaces en constante mutation. Le corps du photographe est évidemment là comme instrument d'un regard pensant. Comme le Janmarie de Fernand Deligny, en autiste écrivain de lumière, j'irai décrypter ces territoires intermédiaires entre le plus intime de l'habitat et l'espace de circulation qu'est la route, voie publique sans spectateur désormais habitée d'automates nomades désaffectés.

Je dois m'expliquer sur les contraintes nécessaires de composition que je m'impose pour réaliser ces photographies. Car, la notion de citoyenneté (dans le sens de l'appartenance à tel ou tel lieu), la dimension publique, les langages et les implantations sont soumis à des processus de désaffectation accélérés mais conservent en même temps, dans leur tissu matériel, des besoins, des phénomènes de contamination que la technocratie actuelle ne peut subsumer immédiatement. Par ce projet des *Notes de bas de pages*, je souhaite aller plus avant dans ma compréhension du monde en documentant mon étude par un regard producteur d'une esthétique que je n'envisage que comme une pratique radicale. C'est dans le dialogue entre le carré et l'espace en marge, (en bas de l'image, les notes de bas de pages), comme une vibration, que s'articulera la romantisation d'un réel fictionné: espèce d'espace de narration.

A la manière d'un Saul Leiter inspiré en son temps par Mark Rothko, j'espère dégager dans mes compositions l'impression troublante d'un intérieur-extérieur fluctuant, comme des questions picturales de composition qui interrogeraient le point de vue. En troublant la vue et son point, je souhaite apporter une esthétique interrogative de la place du corps dans l'espace interstitiel de l'extrême banlieue, à la frontière indéterminée de sa périphérie.

Urbanisme: la domination de la technocratie

L'urbain tout entier, dans sa matérialité et dans sa complexité est envahi par le primat de la visibilité où il faut rendre visible chaque mouvement, chaque lieu, chaque espace. Rendre visible signifie exercer un contrôle, définir donc la modalité de l'espace public en le militarisant, comme l'a montré magistralement James Graham Ballard dans *Super Cannes*. L'entente entre science militaire et techniques publici-

taires nous permet d'affronter de façon plus articulée la manière dont l'urbanisme se configure comme mouvement où se conjuguent des pratiques de colonisation du territoire, à la fois matérielles et idéologiques. La privatisation de l'espace public anéantit le concept même d'espace public ; et par là, le passage de l'espace privé à l'espace public devient une fiction abstraite, une réalité interrogeante qu'il me faut documenter, écrire, narrer véritablement.

L'urbanisme s'affirme à l'échelle planétaire comme fétiche irrésistible du primat technico-économico-idéologique de l'Occident, ou plutôt de l'image que l'Occident a voulu donner de lui-même. Figure de puissance, l'urbanisme d'origine occidentale s'est présenté dès le début comme un tissu omnivore capable d'absorber, de contenir et de transformer les différentes modalités de l'espace public qui se sont affirmées dans les lieux les plus différents du monde entier. La colonisation urbaine du territoire a toujours produit des modifications profondes qui, surtout en ce qui concerne l'extension des périphéries, n'ont presque jamais respecté un caractère organique dans leurs interventions, que ce soit à propos des habitants, du réseau routier ou, à plus forte raison, de l'aménagement urbain. En réinventant les implantations, l'urbanisme réinvente la polis, le pacte social, le concept même de citoyenneté.

La technocrature qui caractérise l'urbanisme actuel apparaît comme suspendue entre l'archaïque et le futuriste. Les terres du milieu qui la constituent sont aussi bien des ruines de toujours que des projets architecturaux d'une extraordinaire avant-garde. Et pourtant, les terres du milieu ne se limitent pas à être des lieux où résider, elles sont aussi les réalités où se modifient les langages et se réinventent les identités et les appartenances. Justement parce que ce sont des lieux où habiter, et non de simples dortoirs, elles sont des réalités où se modifient les langages, les rapports, les liens. Il est impossible de réfléchir à l'urbanisme sans considérer la production sociale qui l'anime et le réalise. L'urbanisme est ainsi un fétiche qui se répand à travers une diffusion capillaire et acharnée qui prend sa source en premier lieu dans les espaces publicitaires et qui dispose des moyens les plus variés pour affirmer sa propre domination. L'accomplissement du processus de marchandisation et donc de fétichisation a donné naissance à un mouvement d'automatisation du langage qui lui est lié.

Le langage du fétichisme urbain, bien qu'il paraisse articulé et capable d'une grande performance, est en quelque sorte dogmatique. Le dogme le plus considérable peut être résumé dans l'idée qu'habiter signifie essentiellement habiter en ville.

Dans son acception traditionnelle, le fétichisme a été compris comme un objet appelé à signifier et à réveiller le désir ; cette inclination était liée à la capacité de renvoyer à autre chose - c'est-à-dire d'activer un irrésistible enchaînement évocateur. Il peut être intéressant de faire glisser cette conception sur un terrain différent : celui que l'on pourrait appeler le langage du « fétichisme » et sa capacité de production matérielle en ce qui concerne la liaison corps/territoire.

Le citoyen, devenu essentiellement un consommateur, est appelé à se plier à l'empire du logo. Mais le brand ne se limite pas à habiller nos corps, à aménager nos maisons ; à présent, le brand s'écrit sur le corps, marque la chair, modèle les goûts, nous indique comment nous nourrir, nous laver, où porter nos pas. Le souci de soi qui animait le rapport entre le sujet et la polis a été remplacé par la domination

biopolitique à laquelle collabore l'armée de publicitaires dont parlait Gilles Deleuze, qui inventent les stéréotypes auxquels tout le monde est appelé à se conformer. Le marketing est maintenant l'instrument du contrôle social et il forme la race impudente de nos patrons. « Nous entrons dans des sociétés de contrôle continu et de communications instantanées. L'homme n'est plus l'homme enfermé, mais l'homme endetté. » « Paris n'est plus, ce n'est pas Hitler mais Citroën qui l'a détruit », constatait Bernard Charbonneau dans les années 60.

À la porte(ée) de chez soi - de la révolte comme mode de vie permanent - sur la ligne de tirs toujours, sur la ligne de tirs partout ! De l'exigence d'un regard au scalpel.

Comme nous ne sommes pas à l'époque d'Orwell, aucune censure ne peut s'exercer sur le regard analytique que je souhaite porter sur le monde d'aujourd'hui. Ce travail m'amènera donc à développer une esthétique que je souhaite critique de l'expansion urbanistique de nos sociétés et de comment elle asservit les corps et les esprits. J'ose espérer encore que l'Art représente le phénomène concret où se déchiffre la culture dans son ambivalence, à la fois barbarie qui œuvre dans la civilisation et promesse de bonheur. Car nous ne sommes pas dans cet après-guerre de La Ferme des animaux. Nous vivons en pleine guerre économique mondiale. L'intelligence déclinerait et périliterait ? C'est de ce réel-là que je veux traiter. Car « le réel est sans double : il n'offre ni image ni relais ni réplique ni répit. En quoi il constitue une « idiotie » : idiot signifie d'abord simple, particulier, unique, non dédoublable. Traiter de l'idiotie est évoquer le réel. Un réel lointain, car à jamais relégué dans le miroir. Un réel voisin, car toujours en vue. » (Clément Rosset)

En vue. Il sera bien question de voir et de donner à voir pour détailler le regard pensant du spectateur, afin, justement, de ne pas vivre et penser comme des porcs. Il sera question de regarder, au sens de pratiquer une bonne écologie de l'attention (une bonne écologie de l'attention), et donc de prendre soin de ce qui est vu comme mode d'exploration-écriture de soi. Il faudrait parler de non-privation de l'intime (Yves Citton) pour retourner au Réel (Clément Rosset), de décolonisation de l'imaginaire (Serge Latouche) et de vitesse de libération (Paul Virilio). Il faudrait parler d'écriture de soi, de révélation de l'intime, mais ce serait ici un peu trop long.

Néanmoins, en guise de conclusion, et pour illustrer ce sujet quand-même, je dois citer Fernand Deligny dans *L'Arachnéen* et autres textes. Cette expérience de vie commune dans les Cévennes avec des enfants autistes m'inspire beaucoup pour ce projet des Notes de bas de page. Il y aurait, selon Fernand Deligny, comme un langage, un vocabulaire, qui se tramerait dans les déplacements de ces enfants.

«L'art, les bords... et le dehors

L'art... Les bords

Où se voit, dans le dictionnaire, que ce mot qui parlait de bordure en est arrivé à évoquer le navire lui même. Monter à bord, ça se dit. Reste la mer, qui serait le dehors.

Et reste à se demander si l'œuvre d'art ne tiendrait pas du poisson volant, de ce dehors qui n'est pas de même nature que celle qui nous est conférée par la domestication symbolique et nous embarque dans ce qui peut se dire l'histoire. Si le poisson volant paraît saugrenu, rien n'empêche

de penser que malgré l'in cessant calfatage, le dehors suinte et que vient faire cette mare qui reflète le visage de qui regarde et fait miroir sans l'être ? (.) Ça se dit que la mer miroite alors que personne ne s'y voit.

Ce que j'ai sans cesse devant les yeux, outre la fenêtre qui m'éclaire, c'est, au mur, un tracer de Janmari, autiste, et réfractaire à ce que propose la mémoire ethnique, si bien que je ne sais jamais s'il s'agit d'un tracé ou d'un tracer. La différence est considérable. Si c'est d'un tracer qu'il s'agit, il n'y aurait donc pas une once de représenté, ce que je crois. Cette œuvre d'art n'est que trace de geste, mais trace que je retrouve si souvent réitérée par d'autres mains que la sienne, mains d'enfants mutiques qui, munies d'un crayon, semblent prises dans une ornière quelque peu circulaire et que nous avons appelée un cerne.

Est-ce à dire que cerne délimite, qu'il y aurait un dedans et un dehors, et donc des bords ? (.) Le cerne est circulaire, ou quasiment, il n'y a donc qu'une ligne, qui ferait bord. Si cette ligne était droite, quelque peu rectiligne, elle n'évoquerait pas du tout qu'elle cerne, qu'il y aurait du cerné.

Il y a tracer, et, bien souvent, c'est un cerne qui apparaît. Mieux vaut dire qu'il nous apparaît ainsi dénombrable, cerne étant préférable à rond ou cercle, bien que le dictionnaire ne puisse pas se retenir et nous parle de «trait qui souligne un contour». Ce trait qui serait pourvu d'intention, ne serait-ce que de souligner, voilà qui peut laisser perplexe. Il est vrai qu'un contour peut se souligner au fusain ou à l'encre de chine.

Il m'est arrivé de dire que la ligne était de même nature que le langage, me fiant pour ce dire à ce qu'il m'était arrivé de voir agir par des enfants surnommés débiles mentaux.

Alors qu'ils (quels) s'empêtraient dans leur dessin de la même manière que le langage les empêtrait, au vrai sens du terme, les entravait, si je les débarrassais du crayon pointu, instrument à écrire, ils s'en trouvaient comme détélés et remuaient leurs épaules. Certains, alors, ne renâclaient pas à frotter leur doigt dans la farine de mine de plomb, et de la feuille blanche alors frottée surgissait une ombre qui quelquefois prenait la forme de quelque chose de reconnaissable, ce qui surprenait tout le monde, et l'auteur le premier. Où se voit que ces ombres grises auraient mérité d'être dites spontanées, si ce mot-là de spontané ne voulait pas dire, comme le propose le dictionnaire : «ce que l'on fait soi-même». Car y avait-il ne serait-ce qu'une once de soi dans ces taches frottées d'un doigt pourtant consciencieux, mais alors il y va de la conscience de quoi, qui n'est pas conscience du qui ? Où disparaissent le sujet et l'objet. Restent la chose et ce reflet, cette tache ombreuse sur le papier, et il pouvait y avoir comme du semblable entre la chose et la tache, trace de doigt, empreinte digitale où le doigt lui-même avait effacé ces sillons de la peau qui permettent d'établir l'identité.

[...]

Est-ce à dire que toute ligne tracée s'origine de la main ? Oui et non, car enfin c'est bien un corps tout entier qui s'est mis à gambader selon des détours dont on pourrait penser que le projet qui sous-tend ce qui

apparaît manifestement est rechercher un accord avec ces «tracer», traces de main, émanant du même individu.

Cet accord, éventuellement remarquable pour qui s'émeut de s'en apercevoir, et s'étonne, je me dis non pas qu'il dépasse les bornes (de l'entendement) mais qu'il vient de ce dehors si attirant, ne serait-ce que parce que l'horizon en recule au fur et à mesure qu'on avance, et c'est à proprement parler d'infini qu'il s'agit, alors que, bordés que nous sommes par le verbe, il nous fait écrire : infinitifs, tracer n'étant pas le moindre, où il y va d'innover tout à fait par inadvertance, ne serait-ce qu'un détour où apparaît qu'il y va de tout autre chose que d'y aller, là mais aussi de faire apparaître la trace de ce trajet, comparable alors à la trace inscrite par la main de qui a marché le trajet.

Où est l'auteur, dans toutes ces manigances ? Il disparaît, effacé comme s'efface l'idée que l'art c'est représenter. J'allais dire qu'il s'agit d'exposer ce qui est souvent vrai, mais alors, la musique ? Il s'agirait plutôt d'accorder, mot dont on ne sait pas trop s'il s'origine de cœur ou de corde. Mais alors, il faudrait qu'accorder signifie créer un accord, et non pas un consentement, une conformité, mais plutôt une discordance d'où vont vibrer des rapports de fréquence.

Le cœur est dedans, bordé, borné.

Il a ses limites qui ont une histoire.

La corde est dehors.»

Fernand Deligny in *L'Arachnéen et autres textes*

Conclusion en aparté

L'image rend l'homme capable d'une relation de sujet à sujet. Grâce à l'image, l'homme accède à la vie morale et politique, à la culture. À ce titre, il me paraît raisonnable d'admettre que le regard des images compte assez dans l'accomplissement d'une existence humaine pour que le spectateur prenne soin de ce qu'il regarde. Mais, «pour voir, il ne faut pas avoir peur de perdre sa place» (Jean-Luc Godard).

Parce que «les actes sont plus éloquents que les mots» (Edward Bernays), j'essaierai, d'une certaine manière, de ne pas être le Walker Evans des années 30. L'esthétique de la photographie (compositions, constructions, matières, couleurs...), et les sujets représentés ne devront pas s'inscrire dans une politique de stricte représentation d'un nouvel ordre politique d'échanges éculés. La série de photographies qui constituera les Notes de bas de pages se devra d'élaborer, par la constitution même de ses constructions, des formes singulières de relations questionnantes et réfléchissantes. Ce qui sera représenté sera avant tout présenté. Les sujets ainsi «montrés» participeront si possible à la construction d'une pensée autonome et à sa démonstration. J'envisage ce reportage documentaire d'une certaine façon (de façonner), comme de romantiser le monde ; à la manière d'un Caspar David Friedrich.

Tout acte de résistance ne fait pas œuvre d'art mais quelque part en est quand-même (de l'Art). Parler des pratiques artistiques qui résistent à la marchandisation propre à un certain art contemporain, c'est manifester le désir

d'agir sur le monde, ou au moins, de participer quelque part à sa réalisation, à sa fiction, à la fabrication de nouveaux mythes d'aujourd'hui. Voilà comment j'entends le loup, le renard et la belette.

Notes de bas de page - Jean Frémot - août 2018





#Covid19, Game Changer??

It's not funny how Covid19 quickly turned from a joke globally to a real grim reaper, causing havoc, fear, and bringing economies to a near halt.

The first lockdown in Wuhan in January is now a trend in many countries and a reality to millions.

Sadly it is the vulnerable that stand to suffer in these interesting times, or is it??

Could this be the time for artists, creators, freelancers etc. to start thinking out of the box? Will things ever return to normal post #Covid19?

Days before the announcement of the lockdown in South Africa, which we anticipated. The Ingredients Productions, Elandskop Museum and Letjhoa Entertainment hosted what were termed «Self Isolated Artist Residency Lockdown».

Oupa Father P Moephudi - an independent artist, curator, rap artist, poet and social entrepreneur hailing from Sharpeville, Gauteng, coined the term.

Father P's work is all over Sharpeville and his famous piece is the Sharpeville shooting massacre at the Sharpeville Memorial/Exhibition Center.

The isolation and quarantine was held at Rhino Heritage Park where the murals were brought to life turning an old slaughter house built around the 1920 into art gallery. Following the sources our Chief Ranger have gathered agreed is that outside play or activities should be encouraged for kids such as walking, bike riding and hiking. Outdoor spaces are less risky than indoors since COVID19 spreads easily in confined spaces. It also boosts health and of the adults! So Rhino Park was ideal.

Working on the mural, following lockdown safety rules, the curator and the artist worked and discussed possible opportunities and challenges that comes with #Covid19. These included new post #Covid19 strategies and working systems. Both creators agreed that this is an opportunity to create new ways of working, to form new habits. In these trying /exciting times, we should accept/embrace the fact that post #Covid19 things won't work like they did in Jan 2020 or as they did in November 2018.

This is an opportunity to create new ways of thinking and working to form new habits and shift our mindsets and consider new possibilities!

Rhino Heritage Park is a park, an offspring of Elandskop Museum project in collaboration with The Ingredients Productions. The idea is to turn a 12ha area which includes a dam nearly turned into a dumping site into a community park and a hub, reimagining spaces!

When complete, the park will compromise of an amphitheater, performance stage, library, open air museum, gallery, workspace, camping area, event space, community food garden, bird sanctuary and canoe club.

Post #Covid19, things won't ever be the same or what we thought was normal again. As creators and thinkers, we should lead the way. #Covid19 is also a stark reminder to us all about our effects and impact we have on climate change and the environment. There is no doubt that during many lockdowns across the world, planet earth itself has benefited the most!

For the first time in many years, community could smell some fresh air, see clearer skies, less noise, less pollution in the environment and this have positive impact on the climate change. We need to respect and remember that if we don't take of our planet, the we can forget about art.

As much as #Covid19 is a threat to humans, it also comes with vast opportunities, we just need to be alive for them!



artist and two weavers from Bothabotho Lesotho

The influence of cultural heritage

Africa has 54 different countries and at the bottom tip lies South Africa. In this country we have 11 official languages, a few unofficial and a plethora of dialects. So, you can only imagine the amount of cultural variations in a metro like Johannesburg, multiple layers overflowing and generating new subcultures. These cultures co-exist symbiotically and spawn new ways of thinking that create new customs, perpetually birthing overlapping viewpoints. When you look at the scope of possibility with new creations within this thinking then the influence of cultural heritage is exponential. The history of our culture has evolved into an abundant wealth of personalities which for the most part is still to be documented in one form or the other.

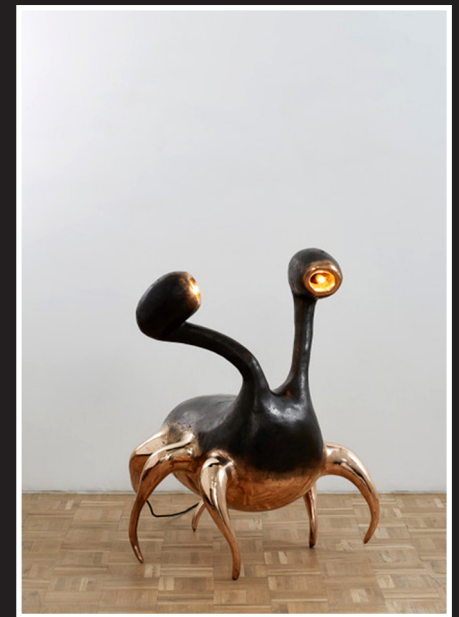
History can also create new crusades from old mistakes; hence I say many cultural revolutions are sparked by art movements. In Germany, graffiti rose after the fall of the Berlin wall. Initially it was rebellious and occasionally political but now it has spread far and wide, visible in anything from advertisements to the most revered art institutes with Banksy being its most notable embodiment.

From the toppling of Cecil Rhodes statue at the Cape Town University came the "Africanize" movement which galvanized a proud South African culture of expression. New perspectives create cross cultures which move across spiritual,

physical and visual borders as a form of overlapping communication. This process is ever evolving but at the base is knowledge of self and heritage. When those fall away then there is no identity, one thing looks like a copy of another and any attempt of creativity is ultimately lifeless.

In the past few years I have endeavored to strengthen my cultural knowledge with the help of my wife Tlalane who is doing her PhD in Social Linguistics. She is specializing in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and she conducts the research which informs my creations and its narrative. So, when I create pieces it is a form of self-expression and self-preservation of my culture with information as an academic element that strengthens the design feature. To have optimum self-knowledge I need inner reflection in a holistic approach and as a designers I use multi-sensory creations to enhance the tactile nature of my work.

I have worked with weavers from Lesotho, where people pride themselves in **hand woven** goods. Their manufacturing techniques, materials, value systems are their way of living with a culture that has been passed down for generations. Even Vernacular architecture is a norm. By collaborating I have entered a new way of thinking which is vastly different from what is found in “developed” countries. The value is great because the techniques are not easily replicated anywhere else, which creates a new desired design language, making the different acceptable through collaboration. So, all culture is important because it informs us on different ways we can live, create, and enjoy our differences, helping us to expand our field of view therefore expanding our understanding of style, material, use and appreciation.



1 – thithana
2 – maotwana finyela
3 – metsing

Art without Conservation a critical position

May these precarious and unprecedented times – as we grapple with a public health global pandemic – be a moment to not only generate online content and stress the importance of virtual exhibitions, but similarly be an opportune time to rethink the canon of art history and its entanglement and intersection with capitalism. It is time to rethink the façade of contemporary art and survey exhibitions of ‘Global Art’ that, during these times, begin with provocations of everyone having access to the vaults of international museums through the press of buttons and screens online.

In our musings on the practice of art conservation, we explore how the failures of capitalism, as exposed by the COVID-19 global pandemic, can relate to the artworld in a context that is critical of conservation and the conservative nature in which institutions function. It is evident that governments, in their state of panic, have begun to pump large amounts of money into public healthcare and are trying by all means to salvage their economies. Yet simultaneously, we watch billionaires donate 0.045% of their wealth to the COVID-19 global pandemic and see capitalists hike prices of face masks and essential items. It is these fierce contradictions, that lead us to question the systems and power structures on which the artworld is built. In an effort to begin engaging with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic creatively and extensively, we are compelled to actively figure out a way out of this capitalist realism¹ we find ourselves in. As we concede with our hypocritical stances in the terrain of institutional critique – simultaneously enabling this system to thrive despite our dissatisfaction with it - we urge you to seriously consider how can we, in the so-called liberal Artworld continue to justify our participation in this capitalist society that is ostensibly killing the most vulnerable.

Despite the exciting innovation that art institutions across the world have started to implement to engage their audiences, and keep their economies afloat. We as the Re-curators deem these actions as not enough, even very colonial in many instances when Western museums – often considered *universal museums*² offer audiences an opportunity to view their plundered encyclopedic collections stolen from all over the world. Only to decontextualize them through housing them in Eurocentric settings. Rendering them into the simulacrum and stimulation³ of stolen property.

Here we present you with our critical reflection that calls for *Art without Conservation a critical position*. The suggestion is not necessarily to advocate for (contemporary) art that doesn't last⁴ but rather to investigate how the professionalization of conservation is in tandem with reaffirming the imperial-colonial legacy of universal museums and their collections of imperial-colonial plunder, of stolen cultural artefacts whose demands of repatriation are currently akin to sloganeering and political correct rhetoric.



We believe, like many cultural practitioners with decolonial frameworks as their guides, that the practice of conservation within museums is a power structure created to protect the interests of **white supremacist** capitalism and the legacy of imperialism. Conservation: a stringent process that requires a handful of individuals with specific expertise to be responsible in the preservation of artistic and cultural objects. Art conservation involves monitoring the object's deterioration, conducting research and mitigating damage. We acknowledge that there has been sustained discourse around museum studies and the admission of the museum as an institution in promotion of the colonial and imperial project. Mainstream museum practices of collecting and curating have perpetuated colonialism, racism and instilled white Euro-American dominance.

1 – The term “capitalist realism” was popularised by Mark Fisher's book *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009) where he argues that the term best describes the current global political and economic situation that seemingly points towards no other visible alternatives to the dominant capitalist system since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The term also has reference to commodity-based art from the 1950s with its preoccupation of Pop Art and from the 1980s in critiques towards commodity art and culture.

2 – Universal museums here refers to how the current structure of museums is based on the hegemonic conception of Eurocentric norms in museology – which included sciences such as anthropology to legitimised the studying of the so-called Other.

3 – *Simulacra and Simulation* is a 1981 book by sociologist Jean Baudrillard investigating the discourse between the relationship dynamics of reality, symbols and their interaction with society and symbolic interpretations and influence in culture and media in the construction of an understanding of shared existence.

4 – A panel discussion held at the Iziko South African National Gallery in 2019, investigating whether Should Contemporary Art Last chaired by acclaimed conservator Patricia Smithen who is currently an Assistant Professor for Paintings Conservation at Queens University.

1. Due to contemporary attempts to transform and re-imagine these disciplines, the practice of conservation is one that remains uncontested⁵. It is pertinent to engage with the notion of conservation as one of the malignant forms of leverage used by the so called “universal” museum to eliminate returns and restitution⁶.

2. “European museums may ‘loan’ back some works from their former colonies”⁷:

Long-term loans!

Joint custody agreements!

“Victoria and Albert museum offers Ethiopia long term loan of looted treasures”! (2018)

How does a nation loot, dispossess, plunder - and claim custodianship centuries later?

3. Conservators often refer to collections as: “my collection”, “my site”, “our own”, despite not

having ownership of these collections.
The questions that should be asked around these collections include:
Who do these collections belong to? Do the individuals and institutions that collected them have the political, economic and lawful means to the custodianship?

4. Do the original makers and users have ownership over these collections⁸?

Extreme protection!

Encased in glass!

No flash photography!

Security guards!

5. Conservation has been masqueraded as the preservation of cultural property for the advantage of future generations. How do we conserve for the future when the present is uncertain, making the future precarious?

5— S. Balachandran, *Race Diversity and Politics in Conversation- Our 21st Century Crisis*, Conservators Converse, 2016

<http://www.conservators-converse.org/2016/05/race-diversity-and-politics-in-conversation-our-21st-century-crisis-sanchita-balachandran/>

6— C. Deliss, «Negotiation: which models allow new modes of transcultural artistic exchange?», Global Academy, Salzburg International Summer Academy of Fine Arts, 2018

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7k7nCG_D7E

7— James McAuley and Rick Noack, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/european-museums-may-loan-back-some-works-stolen-from-former-colonies/2018/08/08/ea0d8c16-95c2-11e8-818b-e9b7348cd87d_story.html

8— S. Balachandran, *Race Diversity and Politics in Conversation- Our 21st Century Crisis*, Conservators Converse, 2016

<http://www.conservators-converse.org/2016/05/race-diversity-and-politics-in-conversation-our-21st-century-crisis-sanchita-balachandran/>

6. Conservation simultaneously prevents the object from its original use and prevents new meanings from being discovered!

7. Contemporary artists cannot engage with historic objects to create new meanings because of the red tape.

Condition reports!

Conservator supervision!

Don't stand too close!

8. And access? Who has the privilege to enter these sacred vaults?

Don't touch!

Optimum lighting!

Ideal temperatures!

9. Pervasive monuments - commemorating oppressive figures still stand. Conversation of "heritage" remains the centre of the defence. Whose heritage is being preserved?

The model of the Western museum is directly linked to colonial ideologies of looting, it's claims of sole ownership and falsified authorship. At the core of the museum is conservation. Conversation determines object values and ensures their historization. In nations attempting to rid themselves of the colonial debris, heritage and conservation are used as key arguments to defend oppressive sites, monuments and artifacts.

Heritage objects are important. They reflect personal and collective societal views, values and beliefs. They form the knowledge that shapes our perceptions of culture and what is culturally significant. Historically, conversation has been used to build intellectual frameworks – around remembering the past. Through that process – there have been various forms of violence which include erasure through the selection and a singular framing of nuanced objects, displacement of cultural objects removed from their original function. Such objects taken through expeditions and or invasions, and the privileging of physical objects thus resulting in an art historical canon that does very little to engage with ephemeral art, oral histories and intangible heritage.

We would like to imagine art without conservation. This includes art that cannot physically be conserved,
art that is ephemeral
art made from natural materials
intangible archives
oral histories
collective memory.

Objects that are already housed in museums that are begging to live a life! to be left to decay and rot.

Liberate objects to die, instead of hiding them in vaults where they will never live.

Africa makes the second move

Black always moves second in any game of chess. However, the game 'chess' as we know it, developed within a particular European historical genealogy, began with cultural contact with the Persians some 1400 years ago. There were also various permutations of the rules of chess that varied in the contexts that was played, while in the early modern period the power of the Queen, which was a secondary piece, was afforded along with the Bishop a wider spread of moves. This was not without the prevailing attitudes emerging in reference to the game as 'Mad Queen's Chess' set within the backdrop of a century of some of Europe's most powerful matriarchs. Nevertheless, this redacted story of the origins of chess often bound to humanistic and enlightenment ideals, played as a means of intellectual stimulus, diversion or strategic simulation. The anthropogenic dominance ended recently however as human beings ceded dominance of this invented game to another mechanism of modern human invention, artificial intelligence, although Kasparov beat the computer system a number of times. This brief history strangely situates us in our African present, at least from the perspective of a certain imperial and colonial genealogy, which raises once again, the pressing question of epistemic freedom in a game of cultural conventions.

Symbolically and materially we, as Africans, find ourselves consistently beginning on one side of the board – the black side. This has occasioned the creation of realities that are often as non-existent as the racial, ethnic, national and linguistic categories imputed onto groups in order to fit the rules of a particular game. While some games are undeniably indispensable in the modern world, their rules are not static, and history clearly illustrates their malleability. It is therefore on these foreign 'rules' that we must discourse. Furthermore, it is our responses to these rules which have oriented our positions in a rigged game that we have all unknowingly agreed to, by signing the invisible social disclaimer contract, which states that we all begin on an equal footing, when this has never been the case. However, as we will come to see, we are also inventors of our own diverse and unique games and by extension our own rules. Thus, to assume the value of one game over our own indigenous games on the unjustifiable basis of constructed normative standards which drives the Western bandwagon concedes defeat by virtue of the fact that Africans will always make the second move in geo-politics, economics, history or philosophy. Yet, it is our survival in this imposed game that proves the contrary to be truer.

It is said these days – in the same breath with allusion to the same technology of the **deep blue** system that defeated the twentieth century chess master at the time Kaspervesky – that African languages are dying. This point like many other points relating to the arbitrarily manufactured modern-day under-development politics and colonial-era-style brigandry has been muted by the so-called evidence. Poverty, disease, war and ethnic conflict are considered inherent problems of the African condition. This scenario which has been labelled symbolically within the economic and geo-political realm as 'Sub-Sahara' or in a wider context '3rd World' has vaguely stood for something so definite it is quite astounding that we prefer to participate in



a world of language decoding rather than to get our hands dirty with the real issue that appears in our streets. We know, that these and other symbols of similar nominal value, in the context of this continent, usually stands for a pattern that has become endemic of the African politics 30 minute wrap-up on major news networks, presenting recapitulations of an age old picture of Africa's condition even in the parts that this continent's developing nations do well to hide. But beneath this state veneer and the corporate Chomskyeen propaganda model, yet to be analysed thoroughly on the continent, is a game is hidden in plain sight, where entire territories are subjected to resource extraction of every kind viz. the mineral, human, intellectual, cultural and epistemic resources and reserves that have been mined out from the continent. The collateral damage and consequences of planned obsolescence of the African ecosystem and social system has resulted in the loss of unrenowable resources, entire environments and human populations. A microcosm of the effects of this abstract historical-political chess is clear on our human world today in the advent of language death. This phenomena touted to occur throughout all of recorded human history, which it surely has given that no one speaks the language recorded on ancient papyri for example, yet modern writers, scholars and pundits alike agree that within the past few hundred years the rate at which languages disappear with their speakers occurs at an abnormal frequency on the continent. Last year it had been recorded, as with many statistics that are often founding wanting about the actual happenings in Africa given our long history with assumptions and wild guesses, that roughly 58 languages became extinct. Some may argue that is a by the by point, but when we consider the tremendous collaborative human effort the languages signify, in both understanding and the act or art of speaking it then becomes clear of the gravity of the situation we are dealing with. That is, it is not only generational issues that are to blame for such disappearances but that they are indeed a by-product of the principles of extraction that have donned various robes of justification such as capitalism, socialism, industrialisation, one-party-stateism as well as tacit utilitarian rationalisations where one life on one continent can be worth a several many more on another. Justifications or no, they have led to the same conclusion which is the extraction of resources. What arises from the predatory neo-colonial and extractive discourse then operates on the same rubric as the myth of mutual exclusion out of the 'terra nullius' or empty land narrative. The theory went that that Africans by nature had inherently been conflict-driven and marred with the tribal animosity, an image still capturing the modern imagination of primeval fear associated to Africa and its inhabitants, which interestingly has been used to segregate when convenient and unleash when necessary. Like many other colonial era myths however, this rested on some suspect assumptions.

In the Eastern Cape for example, a theory espoused by historian George Theal backed by the British administration in the nineteenth century claimed that on the basis of observations, the Xhosa groups were in a state of perpetual conflict with the Khoekhoe with case in point being King Rharhabe's conflict with a widowed queen of the Khoe, Hoho. They believed further, that the Xhosa must have arrived around the same time as the Dutch some few centuries earlier, given the conflict. This theory is of course complicated by the known intermingling, use of khoekhoe place names by

the Xhosa and the oral recounting of the peace agreement between the two parties by way of marriage. Furthermore, what is confirmed above is found in recent studies in archaeology of pottery that show settlements in Eastern South Africa around 800 years ago as well as the Human Genetics project which illustrate that the Khoe are in fact descendants of East Africans who assimilated with the San drawn from the remains of the San of Lake Chrissie. This dates the migration of 'Bantu speaking' Africans as being 5600 years old out of West Africa to the Southern Easterly part of the continent while the first migrations out of West Africa occurred some 2000 years earlier. The burden of proof has always been on the writers of history, but even when debunked, their theories have cast into stone, justifications for land-dispossession as well as ethnic and racial typing that were far more fluid than some annuals of myth-as-fact purport. One may retort that such discussion is merely divisive and only leads to a stalemate, and there again we can be reminded that Black always plays second, and for this reason narrative stalemate is equally agreeable for those who are aware of what ceding to this narrative, without question, in the past has caused. We can then see into our own times of some of our under-scrutinised narratives around xenophobia which distort the real suffering and tragedy befalling migrants labourers in South Africa and in a presentist fashion fail to address the basic cause of the animosity – an unequal society with violence as a historical foundation at the heart of uneven distribution or access to resources. De Doorns in the 2008/2009 xenophobic attacks was then the only rural area to participate in South Africa, mainly against Zimbabwean migrants. However, during the second phase of attacks this anger shifted to the Lesotho migrant workers who were previously considered as South Africans but not outsiders. Clearly the people of De Doorns manifested anger not solely on the category of other, but on those immediate groups within reach that were perceived to unwittingly risk the survival of the community accepting low-paid salaries thus halting the need to raise salaries. Furthermore, the entrenched stigma of Apartheid on other racial groups, asymmetrical labour relations rooted in rural and colonial-era labour practices and national and local governmental failure lead to the violence. One only need look at another Cape settlement to understand the extent of the issue, where a recent study found that the capital for foetal alcohol syndrome was in a town called Wellington, precipitated by the 'Dop' system. This system imposed rules such as that labour tenants and farmers were to be paid in alcohol instead of wages, but without proper income led to dependency, abuse and addiction, which could be exploited for labour purposes. Herein lies another dimension to a historical narrative of xenophobia in Africa than a myth of senseless and causeless black on black xenophobic violence, as recapitulation of an older far more entrenched myth.

However, some may argue, that this is merely a deflection and does not come as a surprise since the African condition has clearly shown regardless in the underlying causes, ultimately Africans were perpetrators of violent acts. Furthermore the 'Sub-Saharan problem' drawn from statistical and model-based evidence from 1st World financial institutions have all shown that Africa chose the path of ruin over simple modernisation. Thus, it is partly the cultural stubbornness of Africans who refuse to part with their out-moded ways that has lead them to be left behind

in cycles of spasmodic violence. Stimulus packages which have been injected into economies by international foundations but just like botched pharmaceutical experiments piloted the continent, people would have been much better without them as free medical care and schooling became privatised. Thus for those who did survive the asphyxiation by arbitrary austerity, returned hardened and more disillusioned by the moral hazard of a free market, and were less likely to resist and more likely to adapt. Those who were even further away from the periphery of the so-called 'global village' in the rural areas were blighted with rural urban migration as well as brain and labour drain while they fend for themselves in poorly politically represented crecels, regional states, municipalities, districts and territories. These are all the sites of language death, making apparent, the damage caused in establishing any real independence and freedom. Perhaps then, the very ones who you wish to protect yourself from so as to establish an equal footing with as Lumumba attempted, have compiled archival evidence on your heritage as an intellectual past-time. From this they could list various underlying tensions and desire for power such as Chombe's secession of Katanga from Congo, or the fault lines between the other 250 or more ethnic groups to rehash old tensions. Thus, from the archives anthropology, it was laid bare like a book of spells, to the administration of the time, that gave them access to the very linguistic fabric of insults, expressions, values and meanings that can be inferred, distorted, subverted and crushed, from a position of military, economic, theological and social power.

Language, when reduced to a matter of survival within such a totalising system undergirds the colonial experience in Africa and becomes pertinent to note when we I ask you to imagine what the world might have looked like without the contributions of non-Anglophone languages such as French, Spanish and Portuguese to epistemic annuals of humanity. Yet these distinct linguistic nominalisms that veneer further groups and sub-groups under these categories, are unproblematically assumed to have contributed to the epistemic wealth of mankind from the position of the metropolis. Many of these contributions, however, largely came in the form of those subjected by the dominant target language which they were forced to learn, producing undercurrents of culture that would be later monetised and incorporated into mainstream urban culture or neglected into obscurity, depending on marketability. Many people in Africa's largest modern cities, today, are bilingual or plurallingual, as a matter of survival. This being a legacy from when the dominant lingua franca was enforced as the target language for civil discourse as opposed to customary discourse and used a social dom-pass, without it the so-called 'native' could not be seen as the 'Évolué', 'assimilado' or the 'urban black'. However the reality of plurallingualism arises out of a long history of movements, migrations and **inter-marriages** or the strategies of continuity found on the continent by its people within that environment.

It therefore follows that in some industrialised urban contexts, or human-zoo's established in the wake of the colonial administrations' urban planning of African cities, the 'under-class' began to borrow from, appropriate, amalgamate and creolise target languages as a viable response to an inhospitable scenario. This would have

allowed for free expression outside of structure as well as to routinely confound those authorities who would have sought to know the mind of their subjects for their subjection. One need only look at the similarities in features of dialects like pidgin, patois, fangalo, kaapse all invented by people of African descent and the Cockney accent of East London developed by the working class of London keep their community affairs and business private in densely populated city and hierarchical society. In both cases this was done by the employment of new patterns of meaning and linguistic inventions, a markedly similar response to a similar imposition of linguistic domination, but in a more precarious context. However, as with any creation came destruction. These creolisations likewise meant that African migrant labourers in the urban complexes, increasingly lost contact with their homes or original birthplaces and would be forced to abandon or suppress their languages in the cities, leading to linguistic decay. In the diaspora, this case with reference to language death was evident in the way that the plantation system suppressed slaves' languages through social death. What remained were traces of the substratum features which were etched out on given European names thus robbing them of the ability to identify, unify and call for autonomy. A similar history punctuates slavery in the Cape and East Africa too. Thus, for many of the future generations of African descent, they would be forced to play the second move and field a board but often with one or missing Castle pieces. Malcom X's frustration at the Black community's refusal to demand freedom by any means necessary becomes clear but also lucid, Blacks were requesting freedom since from the very beginning of the game of racial politics they were playing defence, with missing pieces.

Epistemic freedom, it is clear cannot be extracted from economic freedom which is invariably tied to historiography and the colonial archive that was written and funded by the same economic system that causes our modern calls for epistemic freedom. This paradox however, has led to both the epistemic liberation of Africans via institutions of higher learning and also to their confinement in inferiority complexes in various levels of African society leading to what can be described as a mass-demoralisation. Communities thus appear fragmented, like pieces spread out on a board, porous and disunified. Yet this merely the pessimistic view of the past prevails with the contemporary political ethic of moral progress and lazy skepticism that fails to adequately deal with the profound complexities of humanity and culture and its mystification of imposed hierarchies, chronologies and categories.

In Ancient Egypt, senet, or the 'game of passing' one of the oldest board games came into existence five thousand years ago moved from a secular to a religious or symbolic game some two thousand years after its creation. This game would be played outside Ancient Egypt up to Babylonia, and more boards were purported to be found outside of Ancient Egypt in Cyprus due to trading relations. This being another example analogous to the idea that as an artefact known as an embodiment of Ancient Egyptian civilisation famously founded in The Great Pyramids, pyramids themselves are actually found in greater number in Sudan, than in the entire Nile valley. To return to our board game, the rules of the senet game are unknown, but this board game along with Chaturanga were the ancestors of modern chess, with

other significant contributions from other regions. The latter was played from about the sixth century in India and would be adopted as Shatranj in Persia around the same time before the game defused to Europe.

This would later be introduced or re-introduced to the continent in the form of Senterej in Ethiopia but with the exception that exhibits a marked distinction from the more well-known rules in chess and Senterj. Markedly, the Black king is replaced with the Green Negus or King, and the White King with the Golden Negus which easily destabilises the black-white dichotomy. Another example, in this indigenised system of rules, can be found in the game's 'Werera' or mobilisation phase, which occurs at the beginning stages of the game, where players move pieces as fast as they can without waiting for the respective opponent. From this phase, the board appears disorganised but players then go about strategizing to checkmate the king, disarray here is merely returned to order in the course of the game. Finally, the 'rule' which is more normative than hard and fast purports to various levels of valour or honour in checkmating a rival's piece by virtue of which piece attempts to deliver the final blow. Here, we are given an insight or window into a variant set of rules, which I have briefly summarised, showing a divergence on the cultural, normative standards and even the precepts of honour upon which the rules of many games apply.

Those that seek to separate the continent in order to forward the Sub-Saharan hypothesis would be disappointed to find that board games exist in many forms throughout the continent outside of the grand imperialistic monarchical societies of but not exclusively limited to the Nile valley. The game mancala which is found throughout the world, and regarded as one of the oldest board games too, has been indigenised throughout Africa and found in localised forms and variation appearing as Bao in East Africa played by Central and Southern Africans too, in the horn of Africa as Gebeta and in West Africa as Oware, where from Ghana it was shipped to the Caribbean during the Transatlantic Trade where it persists today. In Southern Africa it appears as Moruba played by the Pedi of Limpopo which arose alongside a similar version of the game called Tchouba from Mozambique. As men of different backgrounds met in the mines, they played this game adjusting the similar operating systems, so to speak, until an agreement was found in the rules of the game. This is further transliterated in the South African context with a game played amongst the youth, in which Sotho girls test their hand-eye coordination by throwing stones into the air and catching them in a game called Diketo.

According to modern thinkers like Zulu, this forms part of a fluid based approach to mathematics and philosophy of science in the African context gleaned via linguistic analysis and seen practically in the application of geometrical shapes in Ditema or sacred wall art, Sotho architecture and what he describes as the 'modelling based' phenomena that Diketo represents. Such scholarship should be seen in line with the recent development of the Ezumezu system of logic by Chimokonam, which attempts to account for an 'African' account of logic based on the reasoning that was proposed by Sogolo, "logical rules, like other conventional rules, are drawn up for those who wish to play the logician's game to learn and apply". African Americans

and in my experience Africans too, repurpose the chess game to play draughts or checkers, confronted with a set of rules they either do not know or find expedient to playing the game and hence the saying of 'chess not checkers' being widely used in the African American community. It can be no puzzle then of how we come to see ourselves as all connected and in struggle with the imposition of a similar game we are forced to play in spite of the gross denial or rejection of our own forms. Never given a fair chance to develop and rid itself of the rules that impede its development, as modern chess has, but rather to exist in a state of moderate abandonment. Pan-Africanism thus, in one way, arises out of a similar African confrontation with the unjust rules of an abstract board game.

The connecting link between all these games, apart from being artifices of human invention, is that they are all fundamentally abstract whether theoretically or mathematical, in that they refer by way of model to how the world would be after our mind's eye accounts for the necessary variables. These veritable linguistic games are thus merely analogous to Schrödinger's Cat, and appear to exist in the box only when opened, but are often related to the observers view due to the relativism of perspective of what is real. Thus, it appears that games all bound up with their logical rules are not as fixed as we might imagine, especially when, as Africans we are forced to consistently make the second move. We therefore adapt these games, repurpose and invent out of very little what has hitherto not been imagined as possible. The cultural products which arise out of the diaspora and the continent in spite of the episodes of slavery, colonialism, the post-colonial and neo-colonial can then be viewed, in context as autonomous demarcations or spaces against the dominant narrative, similar to how evidence has been seen the mainstay of the recent protests in the United States. This approach, only seems to arise in a contemporary storm of the mind-numbing Skinnerian reinforcement or the heightening simulacra of media narratives that consistently narrate events from the moral authority of the Western present, often without full account of the causes of these events as they play out. It is therefore in the attempt at the creation and creolisation of imposed systems, in media, art, thought and culture as well as our own creative wellspring, ancestry and gourd that we become aware of our similar circumstance in reality with others, regardless of race, on the continent and abroad. Thus, if we are forced to play the second move we must not forget that we have the power to end the game in stalemate to expose the futility of a deeply undermining project against the epistemic authority of this continent.

In Youruba there is a saying, "*«You win, and I win, does not make for victory in an ayo game.» Meaning: If every person succeeds, nobody is stronger than his adversary.*".

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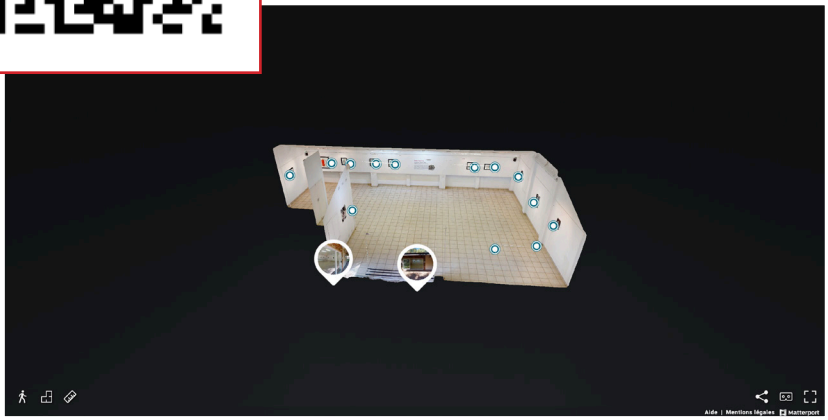
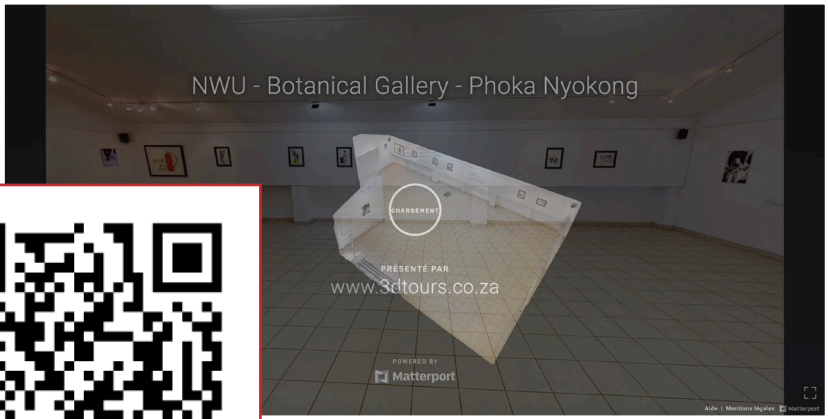
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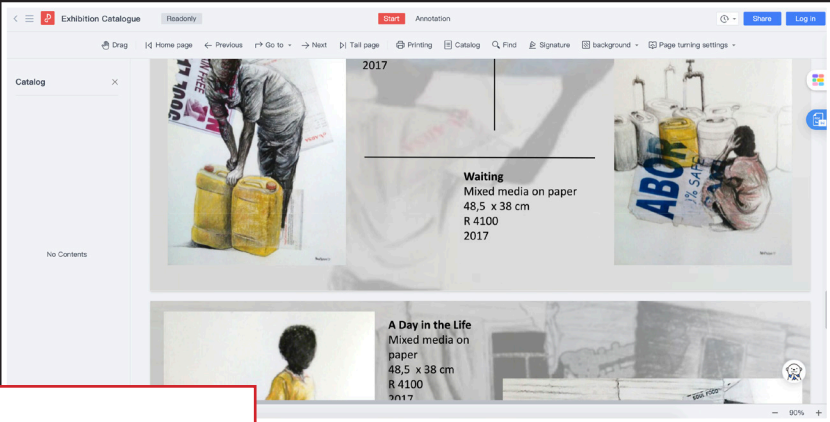
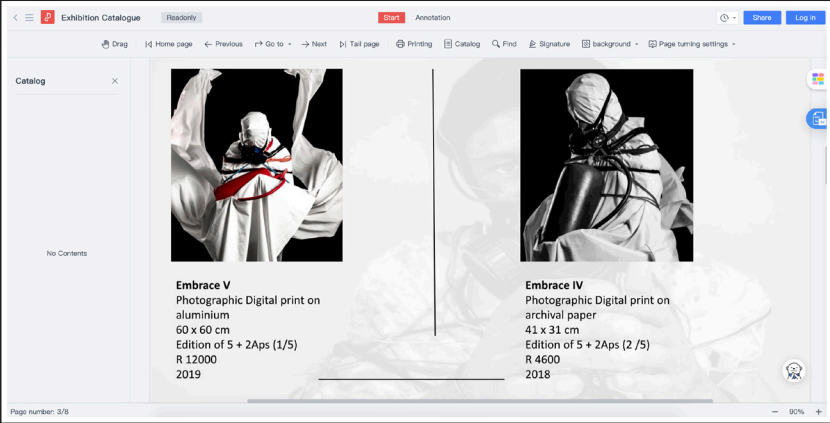
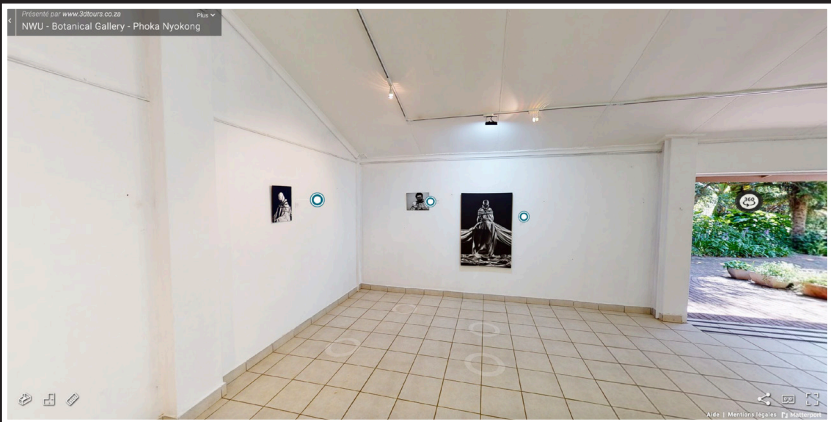
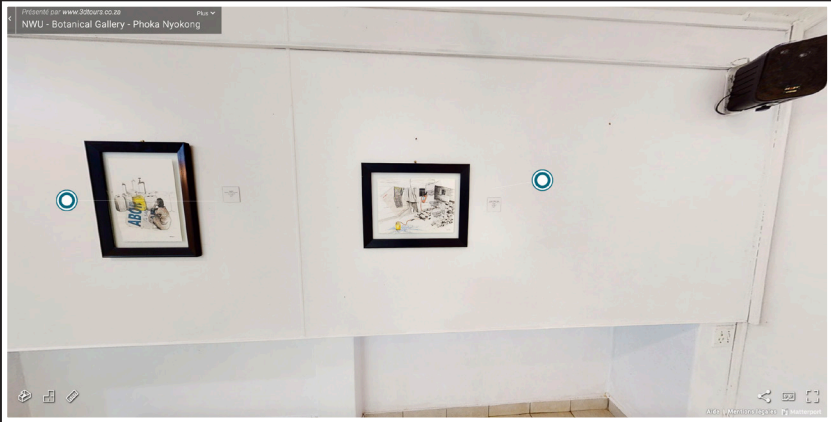
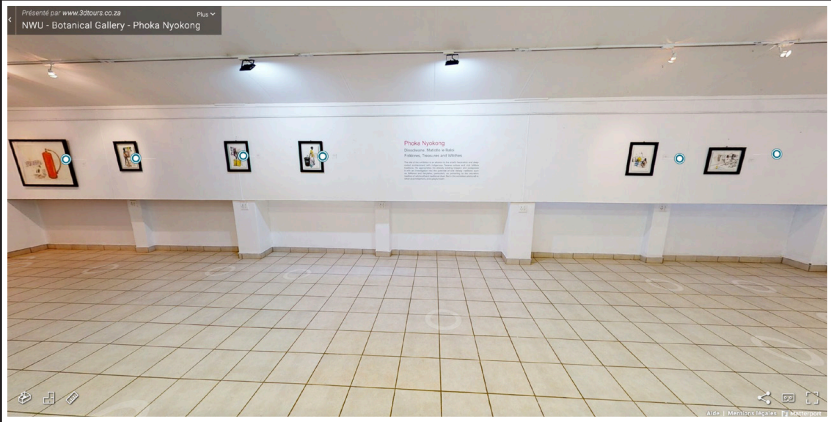
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Zulumathabo Zulu – The Basotho Origin of Mathematics – A Public Lecture



Dear Phokeng,
Ci joins ma photo et le texte pour le livre.
Le mot confinement ne fait pas peur aux écrivains ou aux créateurs en général, il peut même être bienvenu dans un monde de vitesse. Dans la sauvage guerre écono-
mique qui s'annonce, l'Afrique se doit de faire bloc, elle ne doit être le membre
inférieur d'aucun des blocs en gestation. Pendant la Guerre froide, nos différents
pays se sont éparpillés dans les deux camps et ont affaibli le continent, contre le vœu
de Nkrumah et de Cheikh Anta Diop. C'est une autre leçon de l'histoire à retenir.
Réenchanter, réanimer nos imaginaires dans un monde qui se rétrécit. Le désir d'y
vivre, de s'y installer et de le prendre en main à travers l'art, la philosophie. Se nourrir
de la vie, multiplier les oasis et il y aura de la place pour tout le monde. Transformer
ce continent en cet espace de circulations où nous n'avons pas besoin de nous
justifier et de nous enchaîner.
Cordialement,
Ibrahima Thiam Photographe





Monna O Montsho

The words mischievous and childhood are very much interlinked across different cultures, races, locations, and eras. No different can be said about the upbringing of a young black boy in Botswana, the subject of the photographic series. The title of the work 'Monna o montsho' is a Setswana phrase that literally translates to 'black man' however, it is also the name of a wooden sculpture the artist's grandmother used when he was a child to frighten and stop him from breaking her fine china and tea sets. This artwork looks to explore the interconnectivity between cultures through a playful take of constructed photography. The artwork allows the viewer to ponder about their own childhood and their own relation to their elders as well as recall their own family's customs with no racial binaries. Through the construction of a home set, the visual markers seen in the photograph are common items, prints, and activities seen in many households. Upon closer inspection, the viewer can notice the artist's use of personal family portraits in the background.

Of course, the photographic series tackles more than just the concept of nostalgia through different groups of people, but it also highlights the economic differences within these groups. The household setting that the artists creates is common to a very specific income level and out of the norm for others. By having the viewers reminisce about their childhood adventures and troublesome filled stories, the artist is able to almost subconsciously make the viewer aware of the differences between their childhood and that of others in hopes that the range of people's experiences in South Africa **become** apparent.



Monna of Montsho I



Monna of Montsho II



Monna of Montsho III



Monna of Montsho IV



Monna of Montsho V



Monna of Montsho VI



Monna of Montsho VII



Monna of Montsho VIII



Monna of Montsho IX



A work in progress,
abandoned in the
Victoria Yards studio
due to the start of
the lockdown. My
fingers have
forgotten the feeling
of toothpicks. Send
help



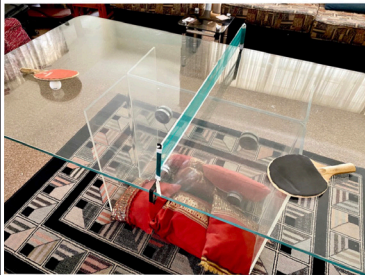
18 days growth into the
lockdown. A pitiful
performance, but hey, at
least I'm participating in
the self-growth movement
online. My "Coursera
jawline"



The new normal
Admin
Archiving
Drawing
Researching



In an attempt to
keep moving and
keep the step
count high, I
ended up pacing
around my front
yard chatting to
friends on the
phone and
listening to
podcasts/
audiobooks. The
result in dialogue
with Richard
Long's "A line
made by walking"
1967 work (much to
the dismay of my
parents)



A study in family bonding
and competition. Makeshift
table tennis setup, the
site of struggle.



Soal Studio ©
manager
Jonathan
taking a self-
study
management
course, ready
to bring new
perspectives
and expertise
to the studio.



Dean
punching
and
threading
bottle tops
in his
garage.
Clearly
some pop
culture
references
creeping
in.

(Disclaimer: the dome in
this image is no way
related to the overnight of
being on top of the
character)



Israel at his
home
workspace.
Bottle top
processing.
He's
expanding his
operation
with a young
apprentice -
keeping it in
the family

Chronique d'un confinement annoncé : derrière le masque



Avant mon départ de Houston pour Paris, le 1er mars 2020, pour un colloque sur les féminismes noires prévu du 3 au 5 mars 2020, en plein mouvement de grève, annuler mon voyage m'avait traversé l'esprit plus d'une fois. En effet les informations reçues en regardant non pas la télévision mais en consultant divers sites sérieux en ligne sur le covid-19 avaient déjà commencé à m'inquiéter. Toutefois, cette conférence dont j'étais l'une des coordinatrices me tenait à cœur, car avec mes collègues et amies, nous avions beaucoup donné de nous-même lors de sa préparation. De plus, je voulais profiter de la concrétisation de nos efforts, de notre désir de créer un espace de rencontre et d'échange à la fois scientifique et humain, à la portée de toutes et de tous. Je ne savais pourtant pas encore que cet événement serait aussi le creuset et la sources d'émotions fortes, d'énergie et de courage pour les jours à venir.

Donc je suis partie. Dans ma valise, j'avais ajouté, à la dernière minute, trois petites bouteilles de gel hydro-alcoolique désinfectant pour me nettoyer les mains et deux masques de protection que j'avais achetés pour rénover ma salle de bain— je ne les ai jamais mis en France. Dans l'avion quelques personnes portaient un masque et les voir, a réveillé mon anxiété et m'a renvoyée au bien-fondé de ma décision de partir. L'aspect positif de ce vol ? L'avion était à moitié rempli. Pour la première fois depuis bien longtemps je bénéficiais d'une rangée de sièges pour moi toute seule. En même temps cette absence de monde s'avérait aussi alarmante. Le fait de pouvoir s'étendre, s'étaler et être moins coincée dans sa rangée et son siège ne voulait pas dire, par contre être libérée, et se sentir moins étreinte et confinée dans sa peur. Si je retrouvais moins coincée dans l'espace, je restais, par contre, bien à l'étroit dans ma tête en compagnie de cet émoi qui me tennaillait et générait bien des regrets : « ah, j'aurais dû mettre des gants, » ou encore « j'aurais dû porter un de mes masques, on ne sait jamais. » La peur du ridicule plus que tout autre chose finirait par me tuer.

À l'aéroport Charles-de-Gaulles à Paris, le 2 mars 2020, j'avais réservé en ligne une voiture pour éviter de prendre le métro et pour aller directement à mon hôtel à Aubervilliers. Cette réservation à commencer à me faire réfléchir à la notion de privilège et à l'importance du pouvoir d'achat. Contrairement à d'autres personnes, je pouvais me permettre de prendre un taxi, de rester à distance avec le chauffeur et d'éviter les transports en commun. Cet éveil de conscience, reconnaître que j'avais un contrôle un peu plus grand sur mes déplacements, grâce à ma situation financière, dans un environnement donné n'a fait qu'augmenter mon malaise.

En parlant de maîtrise de soi et de son espace, avant mon départ, j'avais décidé que si je ne me trouvais pas dans le bâtiment où se tenait la conférence, édifice adjacent à mon hôtel, je demeurerais cloîtrée dans ma chambre pour finir de peaufiner le troisième chapitre de mon manuscrit—pas de sortie, même pas avec les amies, un point c'est tout. A Aubervilliers, mes mouvements se faisaient donc de façon souvent triangulaire : de l'hôtel au bâtiment où le colloque avait lieu, pour aller ensuite au magasin alimentaire à proximité, et pour revenir à mon hôtel ou alors cette triangulation commençait par le lieu du colloque.

Et bien sûr, au fil des jours, bien des gouvernements, nous rappelant leur ineptie, qu'on ne pouvait pas compter sur eux quant à notre survie et bien-être, avaient fait un volte-face qui donnait le tournis, si n'est un torticolis. Au début, les gens autour de moi, ne semblaient pas prendre l'ampleur du désastre sanitaire dans lequel nous étions plongé. C'est fou ce qu'en très peu de temps les choses avaient changé. On passait du déni et du laisser-faire, à une frénésie et un autoritarisme (sélectif) de plus en plus débournés (sans bornes et outranciers). Certaines collègues en visite en France qui travaillaient elles aussi aux États-Unis mais qui n'avais pas la nationalité américaine ou de carte verte avaient changé leur billet pour rentrer plus tôt. Moi je partais le 8 mars 2020 et j'espérais bien que j'allais pouvoir rentrer avant que le gouvernement états-unien se décide à prendre des mesures draconiennes. En attendant mon départ avec une inquiétude grandissante, je côtoyais les participants de la conférence, mais dans ma tête l'isolation se consolidait déjà. Car avant même que les politiques ne se décident quant à sa pertinence, le confinement s'installe tout doucement et insidieusement dans vos esprits alors qu'il vous enserme le cœur et vous sépare des autres. Vous paraissez être avec eux, avec un sourire sur la bouche qui masque que vous vous détachez d'eux car les fréquenter vous renvoie à votre peur de contamination. Illusionniste, vous disparaissiez sous leurs yeux sans qu'ils le voient.

Après le colloque, alors même que le confinement mental s'est bel est bien ancré, je suis allée chez ma sœur où j'ai passé 2 jours après lesquels elle, accompagnée de mes deux nièces, m'a ramenée à l'aéroport pour prendre mon vol du dimanche 8. Avant de passer la douane, le cœur serré, mais le visage souriant, je les regardais en me demandant quand est-ce que je les reverrais. Bien sûr que je jouais déjà à la roulette du covid-19, mais après tout, la vie, elle-même, n'est-elle pas une roulette russe ? Pour aller chez ma sœur bien sûr j'ai pris le métro. Je suis partie à une heure qui n'était pas de pointe et je me suis mise le plus loin possible des gens. Peu de personnes portaient des masques ou des gants mais l'angoisse, palpable installée entre nous, intensifiait l'étau d'angoisse dans ma tête et me rendait claustrophobe. Chez ma sœur, je respirais enfin. L'embrasser pour la première fois depuis longtemps, regarder mes nièces jouer, manger et visionner des films bêtes avec elles m'a dénoué le nœud qui me serrait si fort la gorge. Je profitais de mon séjour chez elle, pour envoyer un email à mon chef de département pour lui dire que j'allais prendre la décision de me mettre en quarantaine quand je rentrerais car c'était les demandes du C.D. C. états-uniens (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) pour certains pays, pas encore pour la France à ce moment mais cette décision n'allait pas tarder vu le nombre croissant de cas. Quand j'ai atterri à Paris le 2 mars 2020, il y avait 52 cas avérés, quand je m'apprêtais à prendre mon vol, il y en avait 878.

Je suis rentrée le dimanche 8 mars 2020 au soir et j'ai fait des courses rapidement. J'ai pris ma voiture et j'ai attendu qu'il soit un peu tard pour aller au supermarché puisque bien sûr mon frigidaire était vide et que je n'avais pas pensé à m'organiser pour avoir de la nourriture à mon retour de voyage. Si le réfrigérateur était vide, par contre ma maison était propre et mon lit était fait. Je ne savais pas si j'allais revenir, si l'avion allait s'écraser, si j'allais mourir ; ces préoccupations m'habitaient bien avant l'arrivée du covid-19. Le fait d'être une anxieuse qui se cache à tous, sauf à elle-même

a permis qu'après avoir vu un film où la famille d'un personnage meurt dans un accident d'avion découvre l'appartement de ce personnage dans un désordre pas possible, a modifié mon petit train-train. Depuis ce jour-là, j'ai acquis une nouvelle habitude : dès que je prends l'avion ma maison doit être propre et rangée. C'est-à-dire que je mets mes affaires en règle, en ordre pour que les personnes qui doivent rentrer chez moi et gérer les conséquences de ma disparition ne soient pas confrontées à mon chaos. Ou plus précisément, c'est encore une question de contrôle.

En rentrant des courses, j'ai découvert un email de mon université annonçant que la semaine de cours qui précédait celle des vacances de printemps avait été annulée. Première réaction ? Je me suis dit « Super, j'aurai plus de temps pour retravailler mon manuscrit. Quelques jours plus tard, j'ai reçu un email qui m'informait que je devais me préparer pour enseigner en ligne. J'avais crié victoire trop vite.

Et c'est là que mon confinement de 14 jours a commencé aux États-Unis alors qu'il allait devenir obligatoire et draconien en France un jour plus tard. Je suis restée chez moi d'où je ne sortais que pour aller dans le jardin. Une fois de plus les notions de privilège et de classe sociale m'ont renvoyée au fait que j'avais bien de la chance d'avoir une maison avec de l'espace et, qu'avec deux chats je n'avais personne avec qui entrer en conflit. De plus, l'écriture devenait le moment de me couper de la réalité, de me plonger dans les textes, dans les idées à développer ou clarifier. L'écriture représentait le moment de contacter des amies pour discuter de certains points qui me bloquaient. Retravailler le manuscrit de ma monographie m'a permis de préserver une certaine routine et de créer un espace mental moins étri-qué. Et la solitude me direz-vous ?

Pour une personne qui est née dans la caraïbe et qui vit aux États-Unis loin de sa famille depuis longtemps, la relation à l'isolement et l'éloignement reste toute relative. Vivre dans l'ère de l'Internet consultable avec ordinateur, tablette et portable a amélioré la façon dont on reste en contact avec les siens—du moins pour celles et ceux qui ont les moyens d'obtenir ces gadgets. Avec différentes applications et logiciels, ma mère peut toujours me contacter aussi souvent qu'elle le désire. Toutefois, il demeure que lors des discussions qu'on peut avoir dans sa tête avec soi-même, loin du regard des autres, on comprend parfois que l'espace spatiale ou géographique de la maison malgré son amplitude, n'empêche pas que dans l'espace mental, le confinement reste souvent peut-être le même ou peut être pire. Après tout, n'est-ce pas dans l'espace mental que le confinement se ressent vraiment ?

Penser que mes premiers 14 jours de quarantaine auraient été une occasion en or pour faciliter ma réécriture n'était qu'un leurre. La claustration mentale ne se faisait pas oublier, se resserrait et me renvoyait, de plus en plus, à un face à face pesant et particulièrement inhibant avec ma mortalité et celles des autres. Donc l'écriture n'était qu'un moment de répit face à certaines peurs. Écrire comme échappatoire, pour éviter d'être totalement immobilisée par l'angoisse se révélait une entreprise souvent futile. Cette première quinzaine couvrait la dernière semaine de cours annulée et les vacances de printemps—déception de plus, anéantissement de la possibilité d'avoir des moments de détente avec les amis.

Avant mon départ, je faisais du yoga deux fois par semaine avec des voisines. A mon retour, à la nouvelle de ma quarantaine, deux d'entre elles m'ont

acheté à manger et des produits de nettoyage et ont livré ces courses sur le pas de ma porte. Et c'est là où j'ai compris qu'en fin de compte, je n'étais pas esseulée ; cette prise de conscience qu'on peut vivre seule tout en étant accompagnée libre. Chaque jour, pendant cette première quinzaine, une de mes deux voisines m'envoyait un texto pour prendre de mes nouvelles. Je restais aussi en contact avec mes parents et mes amis grâce à différents types de plateforme de communication virtuelle. Dans un sens le confinement géographique n'a pas changé beaucoup de choses pour moi car je passe beaucoup de temps loin des autres. Ce qui a changé, c'est que je n'ai plus le choix. Je ne peux plus décider du moment où je souhaite rencontrer les gens que j'apprécie.

Bien sûr maintenant, je peux participer à des Happy Hour (apéro ou digestif) en visioconférence, en ligne, et profiter de ces sessions pour discuter virtuellement un moment avec des amis autour d'un verre en ayant l'impression d'avoir conservé une espèce de routine. Ces moments fugaces d'échanges en ligne, qui pourraient nous renvoyer à ce moment de l'avant, ne sont qu'un rappel du contrôle sur nos vies qui nous échappe. Cette prise de conscience que j'avais déjà concernant la possibilité de ma mort et qui se traduit, entre autres choses, par une anxiété accrue à chaque fois que je dois prendre l'avion, existait avant l'apparition du covid-19. Seulement, maintenant, cette appréhension n'attend plus ce mode de transport pour se réveiller mais se fait sentir dès que j'ouvre ma porte pour aller dans le monde ou le faire rentrer chez moi.

Ce qui ressort de cette réclusion à rallonge, qui semble se prolonger indéfiniment, en tout cas pour moi, c'est saisir que nos vies ont basculé et de se rappeler, avec regret, les choses simples comme les sorties entre ami.e.s, prendre un petit verre autour d'une table, échanger, et rire. Ces moments-là peuvent-ils totalement être remplacés par des Happy Hours en visioconférence ?

Vivre seule, confinée ou pas, en tout cas dans mon cas, car ici je ne parle que pour moi, c'est vivre avec ces débats en boucle sur la possibilité de ma propre mort, jetés pêle-mêle dans ma tête. Et avec le Corona, c'est un autre type de controverse existentielle sur le même sujet donc—plus ça change, moins ça change. La confrontation avec sa propre fragilité et avec sa mortalité n'a souvent rien d'agréable mais, en même temps elle peut permettre de gérer le confinement mental, de régir ces moments où dans la tête on a l'impression que les jeux sont faits, on est totalement coupé des autres. C'est là bien sûr que pour certains l'aspect religieux ou spirituel, le fait de reconnaître et d'assumer qu'un être supérieur ou la providence a le contrôle sur nos vies permet de recréer des liens avec les autres, mais avant que cette possibilité soit possible il faut arriver à confronter ses propres peurs.

Lâcher prise, parfois, délivre un peu du cloisonnement et ne signifie pas qu'on se cantonne dans le déni. En fait, lâcher prise survient après, justement, avoir confronté ses peurs—d'en être devenu hyper conscient.

Ce que cette quarantaine à rallonge m'a démontrée, c'est qu'à la fin il ne reste que soi, à la fin, on a tendance à oublier le nous. Il faut s'efforcer d'aller par-delà cette crainte de l'autre et se lier de nouveau avec lui, sans en être effrayé. Et c'est là que le bât

blesse : arriver à se reconnecter à l'autre après avoir compris qu'en fin de compte il y a que soi qui reste, jusqu'au moment de notre grand départ... Car après tout, nous mourrons toujours seul...alors autant vivre ensemble...

Alors aujourd'hui, après des jours de cloisonnement, j'ai quitté mon antre et mon cocon pour aller faire des courses. J'ai mis un masque en tissu que j'ai fabriqué en suivant un model en ligne et j'ai enfilé des gants. Quand je suis sortie du supermarché, une femme qui portait un masque chirurgical m'a dit qu'elle aimait beaucoup mon masque. J'ai répliqué que je l'avais confectionné avec un bandana. J'ai ajouté « Prenez bien soin de vous ». Elle m'a répondu, « Vous aussi ». Elle est rentrée dans son immense pick-up, je me suis dirigée vers ma petite voiture. Je l'ai regardée s'approcher avec son véhicule, alors qu'elle passait, elle m'a klaxonnée, on s'est regardé et on s'est souri derrière notre masque—sourire qui montait jusqu'à nos yeux. Nos différences raciales, sociales et économiques, se sont effacées, quant à nos peurs, dans ce sourire masqué, elles nous ont rapproché malgré tout ce qui nous séparait. Moins à l'étroit dans ma tête, et encore moins étriquée dans mon cœur, j'ai fini de ranger mes courses, je suis rentrée dans ma voiture, j'ai enlevé mes gants que j'ai mis dans un sac, j'ai utilisé un spray pour nettoyer les poignées de porte du côté chauffeur, mon volant. J'ai mis du gel sur mes mains et j'ai frotté, et puis, finalement j'ai démarré...

Si on meurt toujours seul, la peur au lieu de diviser peut rapprocher, alors envers et contre tout, on peut choisir de vivre ensemble même lors que tout nous sépare... Quel est votre choix ?

Up en plein air

The following is up in the air and all over the place but hey, the times call for it.

→ At the time of writing, I like 93% of the world's population am living in a country with stringent travel restrictions. Yet for a good 3 weeks, even knowing this was inevitable, I still wasn't sure exactly where the dice would land in terms of where I would actually spend this lockdown.

A residency cut short due to the threat of closed borders found me packing up a studio in Lagos and stuffing **works in progress** in one of my big bags. It was work I was planning to take with me anyway but what I hadn't planned on was doing the same dance over the next three weeks going from one makeshift studio to the next before finally making it back home in Botswana to an already underway lockdown.

The creases on my canvases can attest to this repeated, haphazard stowing and unpacking. Character building stuff. This isn't necessarily great for someone who produces tangible objects – although, I have never been too preoccupied with the pristine and too clean finishes in my work.

The day I landed in Botswana was the first day of a mandatory 14-day offsite quarantine for all returning citizens and residents. This period was probably my most “productive”. **A bootleg plein air situation confined to a hotel room for two weeks could hardly be anything but, with nothing else to keep one occupied.**

I am back home now continuing to make these objects I love so much at more of a snail pace.

Projects are being rescheduled under the guise of a resilient sense of optimism that's really just capitalism being capitalism.

I don't have the clear sightedness it would need to begin to think about what art about this moment looks like at the risk of not fully being in the moment itself. Part of that being in the moment will be refusing invitations to participate in Instagram Lives all the while voraciously consuming them for the rest of this lockdown.



Artist's Statement, Creativity under Covid19 confinement.

→ My latest body work was produced at Msinga -Tugela Ferry, a tiny village in the heart of **KwaZulu Natal** midlands. This photographic series was created on 18th of April 2020, during the South African nationwide lock down. It was for the first time, where I felt uneasy and feared to travel to another province due to the outbreak of covid19. My family and I had to leave Johannesburg to **KZN** to pay our last respects by attending our Grandmother's funeral, who passed away Sunday, 12 April 2020.

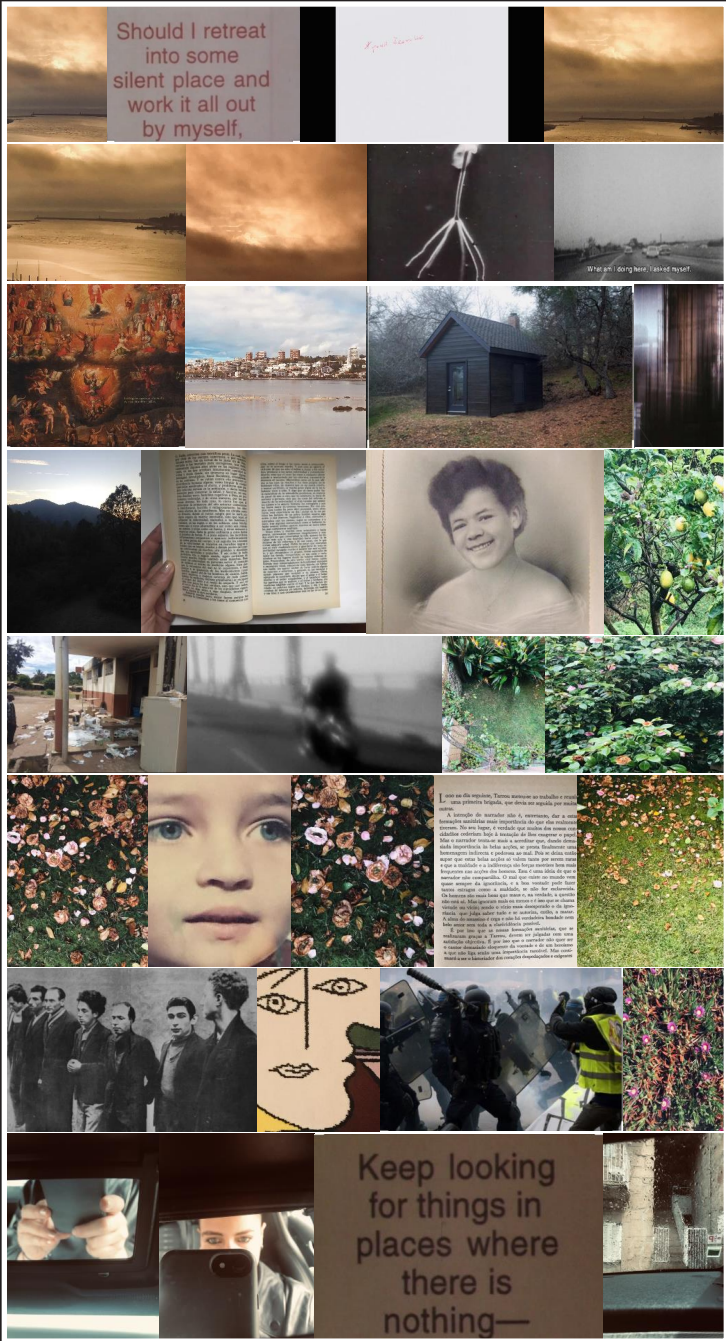
The journey started off as an unpleasant one with so much fear instilled in our psyche caused by the negative news and a sense of feeling that felt like the world was coming to an end. In addition, covid19 traveling restrictions were insane and the thought of contracting the virus was oblivious, alongside dealing with the loss and grief my family was experiencing at the time.

Arriving at the village was a new awakening for me. Not only the rural landscape, farmstead and other village aesthetics were pleasant to me, but the energy around the village gave birth to finding new perspectives in life. The solitude and surrounds of a beautiful nature were food to my soul, looking up in the skies and seeing the milky way at night, was indeed re-energising. Suddenly, the threat of coronavirus ceased to exist in my head space, in fact it was replaced by a sense of feeling mentally free again from fear, a sense of self-awareness was revived and let alone open mindedness.

As I decided to explore the village deeper, I took long walks, spoke the native language, played indigenous games with other women from the village and allowed myself to forget where I come from but be present. I underwent a process of unlearning, learning and relearning about the cultural norms of the Bhungane tribe. I felt inspired to capture these moments after five years of not producing a meaningful body of work close to my heart under the theme of social and cultural documentary. Creating under Covid19 confinement reintroduced me to the little child I had buried within me for years, by avoiding photography as my platform of creating and sharing authentic experiences. The body of work explores the concept of spiritual cleansing, simplicity of life, minimalism and healing through the elements of life which are water, wind, earth and fire.

I am grateful for this period, as it forces us to delve within ourselves and find deeper meaning in the work we do. I am also grateful for my Gogo's life, if it wasn't for this reason I would have not known that I am a young sacred woman, who is forever evolving.







Life and creation under lockdown

Life

To me the coronavirus has not just been a biological virus but a diseases that has caused malfunctions in different aspects of my social life. I am not diagnosed with the virus, yet affected with it in social ways as I today live life differently. Like a patient I am no longer able to live life ordinarily. Even though I am on lockdown in my own house it feels like I am in a hospital, limited in terms of what to do and where to go at what time. In a sense it has taken away my freedom not to mention my rights as an individual and I see it as a violation of humanity. I am uncertain about what the future holds but looking forward to who I will become after this phase. This has given us a chance to reflect and evaluate ourselves, most importantly its teaching us to respect each other and be kinder to one **another becoming** better beings. We are going through a very serious stage which I believe should be taken as a lesson. After I have come to understand the virus more broadly my thinking and worldview to some degree changed. I began to look at the virus differently even though I was looking at it as something that will never affect me because at the time we only had one case in South Africa which was in **Kwa Zulu Natal a different province.**

This changed after having attended a welcoming seminar at my institution, a programme that ran for two days. It was about a week after this when I received communication of possibly being in contact with a person that recently tested positive, the individual was one of the attendees. We were all asked to self-isolate for fourteen days while looking out for possible symptoms. It was after about two or three days of this communication that I began to experience unusualities on my own body and these at the time appeared as covid-19 symptoms. This was a severe headache with shocking sensations where my body had instances of hot and cold temperature. This came with extreme amount of fear of loss of control and death. It was after sharing this experience with one of my professors that I began to understand what was happening to me. As this was my body reacting to the amount of stress I was inflicting on it. Experiencing panic and anxiety in a manner in which I have never done before. Sharing my experience with someone played a very important role in getting back to sanity. This was a result of excessively consuming information about the virus on the media.



Lockdown as a privilege in an unequal society

South Africa is well known with its history of inequality that still continues to affect the majority to this day and age. When the president announced the lock down a week ago black South Africans were once again reminded of their position in society.

Particularly in townships like mine Strand, Lwandle where there's high rate of youth unemployment and poverty. Where you find people working piece jobs and others relying on social grant. These are some of the factors that contributed on day one of the lock down being a failure in our community. On the first day of the lockdown men were still standing along the N2 waiting for potential employees to employ them. People, young and old were still roaming around the streets as if everything is normal. This to me showed that people are not concerned about covid-19 as much as they are concerned about their own stomachs. Having no cases in and around our community at the time, also contributed to how people chose to behave. Poverty being an everyday experience and having felt the pain of sleeping without food, the virus was still an unknown stranger. It was during the lock down that the majority of black South Africans began their "panic buy" this was due to a number of reasons such as most people receiving their salaries at the end of the week, being paid at **the month end**. This was a long overdue panic buy after the majority of the minority group has done their panic buy while others bought more than enough food even before the lock down was introduced.

The virus has unveiled so much with regards to important issues that this country has been shoving under the carpet. The lockdown is not the same for everyone, it is a privilege which most South Africans cannot afford. To begin with the living conditions in our townships where people live in shacks, one room two room RDP houses in which self-isolation is impossible. Where a community is using a single tap, one toilet being used by more than ten individuals.



Creation

I believe that the outbreak has not only challenged me but everyone in ways we cannot begin to imagine. It has introduced a new way of living which we are not used to and since the lockdown I have been in the process of trying to adapt. This is a process I do not find easy because as much as I am learning about myself I am also learning about the new world of the virus. I have come to accept that now I have to abide by the rules of the virus, listen to what it wants me to do. Because one thing I have learnt is that if you disobey, it might even kill you. It took some time for me to understand how powerful **covid 19 is**. This I realised when I could no longer live life as I used to, when I could no longer meet with fellow artists, attend rehearsals, go to theatre so on and so forth. To some degree it has taken away my world, the world in which I draw inspiration from as an artist, and most of all, fellow artists which I cannot longer think and create with. **By this I am** not by any means implying that there are no possibilities of creating as an artist during this pandemic. But rather my main point is that for me this is a new world in which I am still in a process of finding myself. Who am I today, here and now? **we** have no idea of when will things go back to normal, no one knows if we will even be able to go back to what we used to know as "normal". This is not just me. The entire world is changing and learning to live in new ways. Even if we do go back, this experience will always live with us. We will write and create about it.

The most compelling form of creatively expressing myself under confinement as a theatre maker, filmmaker and photographer is writing, filming, visiting my archive and editing old footage. Thinking about old writings, video clips, and images in new ways and attempting to create anew from them. With the hope that I will eventually be able to create work that is inspired by the world of **covid-19**. And this for me will take some time as at the moment I am observing and leaning how this new world is unfolding. While in this state, I am using technology as a vehicle to the other side and the same time learning to use it as a lens through which I observe the world. My world of creativity is finding itself entangled to the world of technology. This for me is new.

Myriam Mihindou, Rituals of care

She enters the room stumbling on her tiptoes. Slowly, trying to keep her balance, she moves towards a yet unknown destination. On her face we read the hardness of the endeavour. It is not played, it is felt. The body trembles. She stops as she arrives in front a low plinth where are laid several threads of copper, a pair of pliers and scissors. She faces the audience, takes one thread and curves it. One by one she braids them onto her hair. The action is arduous and presumably hurtful. When she has weaved all the threads, she takes the scissors, brings them to the roots of her hair and cuts one braid, letting go of one copper thread and the hair that was tied to it. She puts down the piece on the plinth, walks to one person in the audience and hands him/her the scissors. Another braid is taken down. She repeats the process until they are all off. She then gathers the braids with the remaining threads and assembles them into a sculpture.

Titled *Polarisation – L'en-corps*, this performance by French-Gabonese artist Myriam Mihindou took place in September 2019 at Centre Pompidou (Paris) as part of the “Ernest Mancoba” exhibition curated by Alicia Knock. To this day, whenever I think of this performance, I feel it. Beyond the emotional shock, it resonates in a singular way with uninterrupted interrogations I have regarding the ways in which racial, sexist and capitalist systems have and still operate – the body as both a language and a memorial space – how art manifests as a space of resistance and care with an interest on the audience’s experience. It seemed interesting to me to return to this experience dating back several months already in that it provides, I believe, ways to apprehend the context in which we find ourselves. If the confinement affects in many ways the (art)world, one of its most perceptible social effect is how it prevents people’s gathering (around artworks). Another of its consequences is to have made inaccessible a certain number of objects, classified as nonessential thus redefining for the time being our consumption and production modes. We are materially limited to what is necessary for our survival, what is essential to the preservation of our society. As cultural workers, we cannot refrain from questioning the forms of what we produce, their modes of production and diffusion. It appears that the economic impact of this health crisis has made necessary for art world, institutions and actors to rethink the meaning and the forms of our work. Myriam Mihindou’s performance seems particularly interesting to me in this context because it deploys an ecology of forms and it is informed by an approach to artistic practice that echoes these questions.

Muted tongues...

Not a word was spoken during the whole performance which besides reinforcing the physical reception of it, evokes a plurality of the use of silence. The silence in which the performance took place stirs up past and present strategies employed by dominant forces to maintain oppression on subjects. Moreover, it affirms the body as a space of memory, a means of expression and suggests introspection as a way to engage with oneself and the world. There, I believe, lies one of the strengths of the performance. Whispered by its title that likely refers to the coexistence of two



antithetic forces in the “en-corps”, this “en-corps”, in consideration of Lacan’s then Soler’s psychoanalytic, can be understood as both the begetting of body through language and the identity use of the body. The inherent contradiction is to be found in the body as well as it produces the speaking-body, a body that speaks through symptoms when the unconscious manifests. The artist embodied at once the oppressor and the one that bears the assault. She furthermore portrays the subject that has incorporated the values of the dominant culture and forces herself into them. This auto-ingestion of beliefs and treatments imposed by the oppressors, is what Fanon demonstrated in his eminent *Peau noire, masques blancs*.

It is without words that she recalls the history of silence that was forced upon black people - during and after slavery – and with more tools and virulence on black women.

Silence imposed through torture of the flesh and mind, silence institutionalized in social structures, silence lived as the only way to survive. A culture of secrecy that while “protecting” black women, also protected their abusers allowing them to perpetrate with impunity racial and sexist crimes. A culture of silence. A shared silence between victims and oppressors, taught and passed on from generation to generation. A history of silencing that arise as the artist is speaking up from a silent space also to be understood as a regenerative space. It is there, in that verbal distance with the world, that one can meet its unruly interiority, find his/her own ontology. Free from material and social injunctions one enters a place where he/she whether encounters or produces emancipatory ways and strength to engage with his/her environment. A silence that allows the voice of the body to be heard. A memory, a knowledge, an experience of the world detained by the body.

... speaking bodies

Similar to numerous contemporary artists, Myriam Mihindou’s practice takes many forms. Sculpture, photography, performance are the mediums through which the artist develops a research that is both memorial and physical. Her work is informed by the multiple identities of her being and stems from a syncretism of the knowledges, beliefs and practices of the different geographic and cultural spaces she experienced (Egypt, France, Morocco, Reunion, Gabon, Uganda...). Drawing upon personal experiences and those of marginalized subjects, she investigates traumas generated by past and present power struggles with a strong attachment to the sacred, visible and invisible forces and to cultural heritages denied or forgotten. History, language, narratives and body constitute the different and intertwined fields on which she constructs a space for resistance and care. In her performances, her body, that endures various type of ordeals, is a tool and a vehicle through which histories are being shared and trauma transcended. In this regard, Myriam Mihindou’s practice is part of a repertoire of artists whose works are thought and exist as a cathartic space. A space where aesthetics forms, care practices, rituals staging and objects meets to explore the interiority of the human condition, unpack the violence of power structures and provide means of recovery of both the mental and physical.

Rituals constitute universal social facts through which societies organize and regulate themselves, resolve conflicts, reinforce their cultural specificities

and thus the feeling of belonging of its members. As so, they act as a cement of human groups setting up a cultural frame that defines and affect social and spiritual life. Staging and representation of the human body are central in most rituals which distinguishes them from purely linguistic forms of communication. Rituals achieve their symbolic efficiency as they generate psychic and social ties while the body becomes the main vehicle through which subjects interact. They create moments where societies tell and write themselves in the bodies.

Mihindou's performance affirms both this corporal expressivity of the ritual and its power to federate the community around a social matter. It is a ritual through which the artist addresses women's oppression and stages the need for the entire community to tackle this issue. It thus contradicts the stereotype of the "strong" black women that, as bell hooks¹ highlights, was used by white feminists to minimize and delegitimize the struggles of black women against racism and sexism in the United States. In a nut shell, it points out that women's oppression, and specifically the oppression of black women is not a (black) women's problem but in fact, a societal problem. Mihindou, as she engages the audience to help her free herself from the copper thread seems to point out the need for society as a hole to simultaneously contribute in recognizing the violent circumstances women exist in, and participate in breaking down this circle of violence. The ritual leads the artist in embodying violence as a strategy to critique a patriarchal system in an act that resembles a spiritual atonement then shifts towards the liberation from the tools of oppression. This performance resonates with the photographic series *Déchoucaj* (2004) that the artist realized in Haiti while she was participating in a silent collective trance held after traumatic events witnessed by the participants: the social tensions and violence that followed the overthrow of president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The improvised ritual was staging a true catharsis where the silent bodies through unexpected postures remembered and expressed, all together, in a real communion, what they experienced. "*Déchoucaj*" is an Haitian term that refers to the action of digging up the stump of a tree that has just fallen. With *Polarisation – Len-corps*, Myriam Mihindou performs a ritual that leads the audience to a space of remembrance and collective resistance. She makes an offering of her body which becomes a political tool, a canal of transmission and social transformation. The performance's narrative shows a body moving from vulnerability to a state of empowerment; a body that stands for a symbolic representation of the politics that are inherently inscribed in it.

¹— bell hooks, *Ne suis-je pas une femme? Femmes noires et féminisme*, Editions Cambourakis, 2015 ; Gloria Atkins, 1981.

Collective healing

Mihindou's performance was an experience through which the artist and audience merged into a space of recovery. The performance did not allow the audience to experience it as a passive, contemplative viewer; rather, the artist created a space of relation and of shared responsibility. This participation of the audience has different consequences in regard to the reception of the work and how it operates as a cathartic space. If we observe it from the perspective of the use and representation of the black body by power structures throughout time, Mihindou's performance, in the way it engaged the audience, echoes how black visual artists challenge the

nature of performance and most largely the notion of spectacle. In the catalogue of the exhibition *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*,² curator Valerie Cassel Oliver quotes historian and critic Harvey Young about the meaning of the black body in Americas: "The experience of racial (mis)recognition plays a determining role within the formation of phenomenal blackness. The black body, whether on the auction block, the American plantation, hanged from a light pole as part of lynching ritual, attacked by police dogs within the Civil Rights era, or stage as a "criminal body" by contemporary law enforcement and judicial systems is a body that has been forced into the public spotlight and given a compulsory visibility. It has been made to be given to be seen. Its condition, as Du Bois famously observed, is a "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others." This awareness of one's status as the seen/scene structures behavior"³. It has led, as Valerie Cassel Oliver explains, black visual artist to create performances that defy the historical status of the audience and doing so, blur the line between art and life. Indeed, the ritual dimension that characterizes Mihindou's performance, is part of a practice that articulates aesthetics and politics in an attempt to achieve a therapeutic interpretation of the role of art. She engaged with the audience in a way that allowed the co-building of a shared experience where intersubjectivity is mediated by the body. There, the audience cannot be present as a passive viewer. The tension generated by the narrative of the performance, the ritual, call for an active and ethic gaze. As the writer Rosemarie Garland Thomson writes, the viewers "become ethical starters by being conscious in the presence of something that compels our intense attention. What gives such attractions power in these formulations in their capacity to vivify human empathy"⁴. From an observer, a silent accomplice of the violence, the audience/participants become the accomplice of an act of liberation. Its double status, but rather its transition, mirrors the one of the artist that embodied the oppressor and the oppressed. The political and social commentary of the work, its healing abilities, lie not only in the final gesture of the artist but lodge itself in the role that is given to the audience. Involving all the participants, the ritual constitutes a moment of social cohesion, a space-time that seeks and allows collective healing. It is inscribed both in the aesthetic and social realm. Thinking performances as ritual as Myriam Mihindou does underlines the role of art in shaping social and political life. The healing of individual and collective wounds is the approach through which the artist activates the role she wants art to play in society. Engaging with social crisis, she produces art with an ethical awareness, spiritual and civil substance.

²— November 17, 2012 – February 16, 2013, Brown Foundation Gallery, Houston, US

³— Harvey Young, *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), p.12. Quoted by Valerie Cassel Oliver in her essay

"Putting the body on the line: Endurance in Black Performance" in *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, (Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2013), p.15.

⁴— Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Staring: How We Look* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 186. Quoted by Frieda Ekotto in her essay "Body Talk and Thoughts on Power" in *Body Talk, Feminism, Sexuality and the Body in the Work of Six African Women Artists*, Edited by Koyo Kouoh, (RAW Material, WIELS, & Motto Books, 2016), p.105.

What will remain

As we question the role and means of art in the context we are facing, we cannot dismiss the fact that the health crisis has only made more visible the ideologies on which are built our political, economic and social infrastructures and the inequalities resulting from them. As visual artist Jonas Staal notes: “all of this [health and economic measures taken by government to deal with the crisis] exemplifies a preexisting mentality, a preexisting propagation: every day, tens of thousands of people die because of poverty, exploitation, and warfare. Such people are now additionally confronted with this virus, and for them, regulations such as “social distancing,” regular handwashing with soap and water, and working from home sound absolutely absurd—consider just that 25 percent of the world population already does not have access to adequate sanitation. »⁵. In a pre-pandemic context, where artistic production is driven by market forces, culture and art lose their symbolic and social value to the benefit of the spectacularization of art exemplified by an overemphasis on material, artists are pushed to over produce and created bigger and flashy artworks for the eyes of the visitor/consumer/collector, Myriam Mihindou’s performance illustrates practices that offer entries to think of what art can do in mutilated societies. Polarisation – *L’en corps* is a performance that rely on a minimalistic yet powerful artistic gesture that raise fundamental issues of our contemporary times. While requiring simple material and shapes that one could assimilate to *arte povera*, Mihindou’s work results in a long-term research through which she feeds herself with knowledge, beliefs and practices from individuals, places and resources that her investigations led her to. Resulting in a syncretism of knowledges, the performance focuses on the trans-emotional characteristic of the artwork. Positioning herself on the margins of an artistic approach dictated by market forces and in a critical perspective of dominant discourses; she suggests ways to engage with the world and others that is to be found in one’s own interiority. A place of silence that allows to listen more carefully to both the speaking body and the external world; where we find and redefine what makes us and what binds us to the world and to others.

Engaging with art as a space of care, her practice is rooted in her attention to population that are oppressed and rendered vulnerable by different forms of domination. She thus contributes to a long and ongoing reflection about the means and capacities of art to affect individuals and societies’ life. Due to its global impact, the lockdown forces us to question the way we live albeit its temporary nature. The otherwise persistence of power structures that put nature and human livess at risk, compel us to expand our reflection from creativity under confinement to creativity after confinement. How will these weeks, that have shaken the world while only accentuated the disastrous consequences of the conditions in which we live impact the way we think and make art? What will/should change? What will/should remain? What does/will our societies need? Following philosopher Isabelle Stengers advocacy for “slow research” in social science, curator Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez in her article *For Slow Institutions*⁶ offers an insight on “how institutions of contemporary art can counter the imperative of late capitalism and neoliberal progress driven modes of living and thinking”. In a context where, as cultural workers, we are forced to slow down, but wonder how to remain productive, Myriam Mihindou’s way of engaging

with art can nourish our thoughts on how we experience this assigned pause and what may come out of it.

5— Jonas Staal, “Coronavirus Propagations”, e-flux, March 17, 2020, <https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/coronavirus-propagations-by-jonas-staal/9671>
6— Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez, *For Slow Institutions*, e-flux, October, 2017, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/85/155520/for-slow-institutions/>



An Artist in Lockdown - Dirty Dishes and a Mind full of Rubbish ←

An Artist in Lockdown - Dirty Dishes and the Search for Meaning

An Artist in Lockdown - Dirty Dishes and the Essence of Life

An Artist in Lockdown - Doing Dishes and other Non-Essential Services

She stopped doing the dishes after day seven. Not that she was too busy to do them, on the contrary; there had never before in her life been so much time to do the dishes. In fact, time in these days was so abundant it had almost entirely lost its value. No, it was not for a lack of time that she stopped doing them - she just sort of grew tired of the task. There was something about that specific chore that made her too aware of the mundaneness of life; washing dishes was indicative of yet another day having come and gone in the total absence of anything noteworthy happening besides time itself having passed since the last time she had washed them. Doing the dishes demonstrated this endless loop: life = time passing = dirty dishes = doing dishes.

Since the lockdown began, life had become reduced to this tedious, endless loop consisting of those bare essentials: eating, drinking, sleeping, doing the dishes and the two 'p'-ings that take place on the toilet. She could not quite believe that this is what it boiled down to. At least in content, the order might slightly differ from person to person. For her, if you started at the beginning of a day it would be: pooping, drinking, eating, doing the dishes, sleeping. You might fit in eating a couple of times more in there but the gist is clear. After day seven then came the shift: pooping, drinking, eating, sleeping. No more doing of dirty dishes. While the other verbs symbolised the more critical things necessary to stay alive, the dishes, she realised, were in fact not a necessity, not essential; any vessel really can function as a cup. Today (was it day 15, 16 or 17? Sunday or a Thursday?), she was drinking her coffee out of a glass container that had at some point probably held some type of condiment - she sniffed at it before taking a sip: olives.

And so day seven had presented itself with the mind-blasting epiphany that the washing of dishes was no longer essential. Some things as it turns out in life are essential, and some things are not. These lockdown days were dedicated to figuring out which is which. Not an easy task, as it seems that essentials differ not from person to person, but country to country. For instance, South Africa defines essential things

differently to Germany. While in Germany things such as exercise and fresh air are considered essential, in South Africa they are (the Minister's words were clear) not.

In South Africa, the list of essentials includes - like elsewhere in the world - the washing of hands. This is top of the list essential, very very essential. Perhaps even the most essential. Food, also very essential (although some types more essential than others). Going to the toilet (and the tools associated with it ie. toilet paper) also rather essential, sleeping - depending on who you spoke to - of utmost essentialness while waking up - for her and many many other artists at least - not quite that essential.

Some things that one previously - naively perhaps - had considered essential were no longer deemed so: social connections? Not essential. Very very unessential even! Forbidden in fact! Sex? Also: not essential, sorry! Exercise, fresh air and movement, as mentioned before, were also things that one used to consider essential and that were now really not at all. Then there were those things that with placement by government into the «non-essential» category gave rise to the realisation that they were in fact actually more essential than anyone would like to admit. One of the top Google searches in South Africa that week: «How to make alcohol». Therefore the classification of beer as a non-essential in essence highlighted its true essentialness to people's lives. The things that were included officially in the list of essentials were more than one might have expected. Everything to do with the financial sector and banking: essential. No surprise there really. Medical services: essential. Obviously and thankfully. Birth and death certificates: essential. Naturally. Newspaper, Broadcasting and Communications: essential. Again, praise be to the powers that be.

«Production and sale of any chemicals, hygiene products, pharmaceuticals for the medical or retail sector.» - Essential.

«Cleaning, sanitation, pest control, sewerage, waste and refuse removal services» - Essential.

«Postal services and courier services related to transport of medical products» - Essential.

«Private security services» - Essential.

«Air-traffic Navigation, Civil Aviation Authority, air charters, Cargo Shipping and dockyard services» - Essential.

«Funeral and cremation services, including mortuaries services and the transportation of mortal remains» - Essential.

«Gold, gold refinery, coal and essential mining» - Essential.

Hold up. What was that? «Gold, gold refinery, coal and essential mining»? Okay, sure, coal and uhm, sure, «essential mining», that makes sense that those would be essential. But gold? Surely that was not essential essential. But there it was. Point 22. Somewhere in the middle of the «essential document». Point 22, a very short-worded essential point. She almost missed it while reading over the document, neatly packed away in the middle of the other more obvious essentials. Who knew gold was so essential? She thought of that phrase that hippies used to say, «You can't eat gold», which of course meant, basically, that gold was not essential for life, for living. Guess those hippies were wrong! Ha! Who would have thought?!

And what of the Arts? Where on this list of essentials did one find art? Well nowhere of course. It did not fit on that list and one would be naive to think that it should. Where did that leave the artist? Of course, other than struggling, there was nothing novel about that. Alone at home sipping coffee out of an old olive jar, contemplating the sense of life under lockdown seemed only natural, but what about the artist's artistry? What was it that was expected of an artist to do now? While most of the world's population was consuming more art than ever before, while the world turned to series, movies, music, stand-up comedy and the likes to pass the time, to distract, to heal, to comfort, what were those creators of that content doing now?

She knew some artists that had resorted to sharing on the social medias filmed video versions of what would otherwise have been live performances of dance, theatre, song. Many, many an artist friend had begun creating new content that included things like reading stories on Instagram, on Facebook, on Youtube; performing monologues to an unknown and invisible audience. She knew stand-up comedians turning to podcasts, singers sharing live online concerts from their living rooms, dancers inviting audiences to watch them twitch and turn in their kitchens.

Many an artist friend had tried to convince her to join in on using the abundance of empty time to improve on skills required of their artistic form, to subscribe to online courses on screenwriting or acting, to learn a new language or accent for future auditions, or join in on creating new content for social media platforms. To stay relevant, they said. To be ready to present new skills when things were up and running again. To come back with a bang as soon as life «goes back to normal».

She could not see things «going back to normal». In fact, she felt that nothing was normal and perhaps nothing had ever been normal. She felt like this was in a way the one thing that she was trying to do: to retain some form of sanity within all the madness. Other than an outside pressure to stay productive, she felt no real need to create anything. Felt and saw no need to produce anything new, to add to an already overflowing abundance of art and media filling every nook and cranny of the internet. She had watched a show about people going on a handful of blind dates (literally blind; they spoke to each other from separate rooms and could not see or - perhaps even worse! - smell each other) to then propose to one of these strangers and then get married just 28 days later. Maybe everything already existed and there was no need for more just at this moment? Maybe there was an abundance of series,

music, movies, poems, and performances already there for people to consume even if the president decided to hold another 6 presidential addresses where he somberly explained the necessity to extend the lockdown period yet again?

She wondered: Was the role of an artist amidst this reality really to stay productive, to adapt, to find alternative ways to put out work? Surely theatre is not meant to be adapted to the small screen, surely the essence of theatre, even now, was that it was live, tangible. The magic of watching a play is that you are so close to the artist on stage that you can sense their presence even before the curtain is drawn, you can feel their excitement before they enter the stage and again, when you clap and they bow and there is an exchange of energy between the audience and the artist. The magic of going to the theatre is hearing the man in the front row awkwardly attempt to stifle his giggles that quickly ripple from one seat to the next to culminate in an eruption of laughter across the entire room, to feel the floor shake when the dance group begins its final dance, to become the artist's eye line, to smell the sweat gathered in his temples as he gives us his life.

She wondered - maybe because she was lazy and would rather eat cookies in bed than be productive right now but maybe also because there was some truth to it - if maybe one did not have to translate art for the small screen and force it to lose its thickness or its texture in the process. Maybe one did not have to water down one's art for easy, in-home-consumption. Like that Oros (or 100% real fruit juice, depending on your background) that mothers used to make when times were tough; completely disregarding the correct mixture and adding far too many parts water to syrup. The Oros taste was still tangible of course, but it was not in the least bit satisfying. Maybe, for now, one could just drink water and grow thirsty for the real deal so that when finally life out there resumed and theatres re-opened, then people could quench their thirst on that proper (almost shockingly neon) orange drink and the experience would be invigorating, toe-tickling and absolutely mind-shattering.

Maybe as an artist, there was value in just being and taking in everything there was to take in. To watch and observe all the absurdities presenting themselves and pondering on those. Like that alcohol-absurdity. She was perplexed at how a nation could be so dependent on alcohol but yet so quick to judge when it came to homeless people consuming the very same thing that may not be missing from any serious braai (or really any meal for that matter). How could there lie legitimacy in the phrase «I don't give money because you will buy alcohol» when the same person reasoning this to the beggar will likely be amidst the mass of persons flocking to a liquor store as soon as the ban is lifted to buy some fine bottles of 750 ml Pinotage to (finally!) stock up the wine cellar. How could one expect more self-control from a person without a home who sleeps on the hard concrete floor with no protection, no warmth, no safety: did that type of experience really require soberness? She wondered if this was the time that could and should be used to re-examine values, morals, beliefs? Perhaps drinking coffee out of an olive jar and contemplating the possibilities of a different world was not that unproductive, perhaps it was what was needed to imagine the possibility of a different type of normal after lockdown?

Could some of this time be dedicated to fantasizing perhaps about a world where a universal basic income could be possible? Free housing? Freedom of movement? A right to food?

As these thoughts entered and left her mind, randomly assorting themselves in words and pictures, she sipped on her coffee (definitely olives!) and looked towards the sky. The lower layer of clouds, light and fluffy, was moving in the opposite direction of the clouds a level above, which were moving at a far higher speed in the other direction. Was that normal? These days nothing seemed to be as usual. The moon was larger, the air smelled different, sounds moved slower and flowers that she had never seen had popped up in the soil outside of her house. These days everything seemed like a symbol. A sign. An omen. For what, she did not know. Many religious leaders seemed to have some sort of idea. There were those religious leaders who claimed that the virus in itself was a sign, an expression of God's disappointment in human behaviour. Just like in the days of one or the other bibles, if humans dared to stray from Him, punishment was inevitable. And that time for collective punishment clearly had now arrived.

«So we just have to accept this as punishment?» She wondered.

«No. He is the cause but is also the cure.» They said.

«So then, does God want us to die, or does he want us to live?» She wondered.

«He wants you to believe!» They said.

«But why?» She wondered.

But she was not interested in the answer, she knew that it would not be satisfactory. Then there were those religious leaders who explained the virus as one of the many plagues that will descend upon the earth as a precursor to the end times. Inevitable, therefore. No amount of believing or praying could halt this and no amount of negotiating or begging would make God cave or change his mind. This is the price we pay for being a human living on this earth. It's a trade-off: You get life, but you will also have to die. No negotiating.

She shrugged and took the last sip of her olive coffee. And decided that amidst all the madness perhaps it was her task just to keep being and attempting to stay sane. Maybe, maybe an artist's purpose was to be much like a religious leader: to come up with creative reasons that give purpose to these senseless days doing dishes.

March 26, 2020

On his fifty-second birthday, my brother in Varese smiles onscreen
with his four
 huddled children who laugh about the fact that the youngest among
them has taken
 ownership of the conjugal bed, she has been cuddling up with her
mother while
 dad sleeps on a small cot a few meters away—as if that was enough
to protect
 him from the disease since Claudia, his wife spends her days mending
patients with
 her anesthetic hands at the local hospital while new priests are sworn
into the Church
 in a hurry and the Archbishop of Milan walks all the way to the top
of the Duomo
 to hail to the golden statue of Mary and beg her to protect the city,
he sings her lines
 of the song we all know in our tongue-twisting dialect, a language
full of words
 for things that don't exist anymore, like the men who picked tree
limbs off the
 water for a living, or the sound of chestnut skins exploding over
pine-tree fires
 and the litany of spells for times like these, the enchantments to save
the overcome
 bodies dispatched to the night like babies dying in their sleep, while
my friend Maria-
 Chiara puts aloe and band-aids on her cheekbones where the plastic
mask meant
 to protect her eyes rubs her skin to the core all day long as she bends
over a patient
 whose wife begged her on the phone to tell him she loves him, and
Maria-Chiara's
 protective gear is the last thing he sees of the world, because in Bergamo,
too there is
 a hole opening behind every old house's landing, every wiped surface,
every dog
 being walked along the city walls that nothing ever breached in their
seven hundred
 years of existence, and if it is true that the Pope's plenary indulgence
tomorrow
 is worth a free admission to heaven, even via videoconference, even if
you don't
 watch him live, I will attend from my Florida screen to this lonely man
crossing
 St. Peter's Square in the rain, breathing heavily as he starts to bless
an entire
 generation of Italians who might get rooted off the face of the planet,
because they
 die aware they will disappear into army trucks dispatched to relieve
the local morgues
 of the bodies they cannot store, or bury, or burn, and because in the midst
of all this, life
 has its ways to go on, my friend Luisa's mother dies of something that
has nothing
 to do with the virus and I am as far from her as I have chosen to be,
because I built
 my days over the assumption that distances didn't count, and borders were
a thing of the past.

Période (vaisseau) spatial(e)

Les semaines s'égrènent comme des gouttes d'eau tombées du ciel. Cloc cloc. Parfois l'une après l'autre, parfois par flot et par flow. Con-finée. Comme, comment, un conf(1)it naît. Ce mot se répète et fait des boucles dans ma tête. Ou un confit né? Un con finé, finement? Somme toute délibérément. Je ne sais plus à la fin. Les mots jouent et se jouent de moi aussi parfois. Je pense à ELLEUX. Elleux pour moi se sont ceux qui n'ont pas eu le choix, qui n'ont pas eu de choix. Pour qui parfois il ne reste que la foi. Nous ne sommes pas égaux et ne l'avons Jamais été.

Je pense à ma chère et douce Afrique, comme une kaka¹ drapée d'un vieux pagne élimé qui regarde ses enfants faire n'importe quoi, prendre des décisions pour elle, sans jamais la consulter. Elle, qui a pourtant vu tellement de choses passer, passées, trépassées.

1 — Kaka peut signifier grand-mère, mais également grand-père ou petits-enfants en langue Sara du Tchad.

Je pense à toutes ces personnes coincées, cloîtrées avec des conjoint.e.s violents. Je pense à tous ces enfants placés qu'on a renvoyé bon gré, mal gré, malgré, dans leurs familles. Au petit bonheur la chance, advienne que pourra. La scène se jouant à huis-clos, yeux mi-clos pour le moment.

Je pense à tous ces petits privilèges du Nord, de pouvoir continuer à aller dans des lieux nous permettant de nous acheter de quoi nous substanter, nous soigner, tous ces petits riens qui font parti d'un tout. Et toutes ces personnes invisibilisées qui sont là pour nous. Le nous de la société.

Je pense à toutes ces personnes qui travaillent d'arrache-pied dans le domaine médical et tant d'autres, pour sauver des vies. Je pense aux malades, d'ici et d'ailleurs. Tout.e.s épuisé.E.s par un système épuisant. A bout de souffle. Et un vous-nous avec lui.

Je pense à toutes ces personnes déjà fatiguées par la vie depuis fort bien longtemps, mais qui n'ont d'autres choix que d'aller travailler, car ELLES n'ont pas le choix. Ce choix de rester à la maison faire du télétravail comme un travail 2.0, qui n'est accessible qu'à une poignée de nantis. Tant pis pour les autres, comme d'habitude. Je ne vois déjà plus la différence entre les jours de semaine et ceux du week-end. Con-finée.

Moi avec moi. Moi dedans moi. Moi toujours en moi. Et tant d'émois. Certains jours cloisonnée dans une pièce comme cloisonnée en moi.

D'autres où je sors par chance marcher un peu dans le jardin, m'évertuer et me ragaillardir des rayons de soleil qui caressent ma peau qui a tant pâli après plus de dedans que de dehors.

A être plus à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur. PrivilègeS. Je pense à elleux. Je fonctionne jour après jour, pas en semaine, et encore moins en mois mais juste en moi.

« A chaque jour suffit sa peine » comme dirait l'autre. Certains jours je me réveille, je m'éveille, je pro-crée une liste à rallonge dans mon agenda dont je m'empresse de rapidement slasher une case.

Hop ! Hope. Et de une ! Mille et une idées fourmillent sans cesse à l'intérieur de ce petit crâne que je nomme ma tête. Faire ci, ça et puis ça aussi. Et ô ciel ! J'ai oublié tout cela également. Parfois je slashe à tout va comme on slalome à roller à travers les plots.



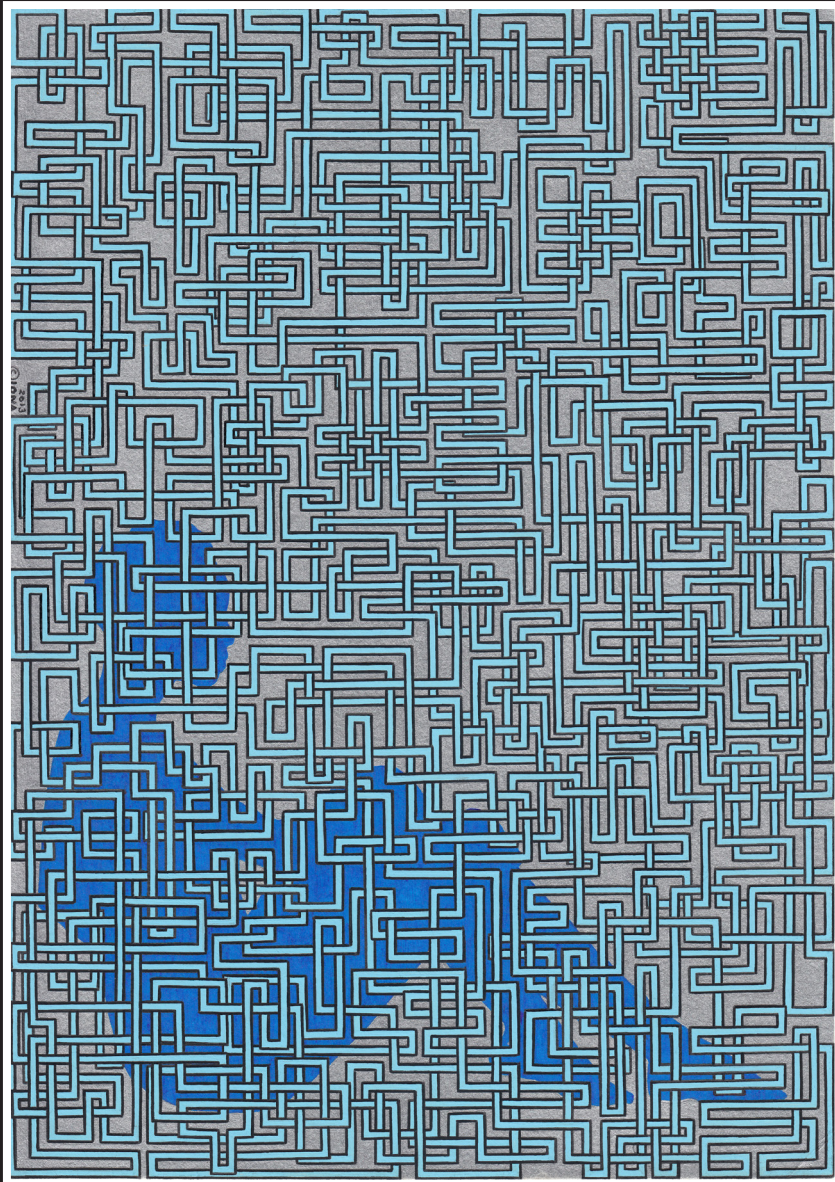
D'autre je regarde de loin tout cela, je ferme mon agenda, mes yeux aussi et je reste là à méditer.

Dans un avant-après ou un après-avant, en essayant de rester sur l'instant présent.

Et puis viendra un après. Un après car conf(li)t-ne-ment. CONFLINEMENT. Un après rempli d'espoir. Que tout le monde fasse enfin, en fin, tomber ses œillères. Cacher ses mains derrière ses yeux ne suffit et ne suffira plus. En avant toutEs à bâbord dans le cirque du capitalo-néoliberalo-débilo. Applaudissez mesdames, messieurs, les portes de l'arène sont pour la première fois depuis des dizaines d'années, grandes, ouvertes. Ou vertes. Sur un possible changement. Ou change, ment. Le champ des possibles reste et a toujours été, ouvert, ou vert. Vieux système enrouté, en-rouillé, enragé. Qui crachote comme un vieux père qui a fumé toute sa vie et n'a plus que son vieux mouchoir à carreaux pour pleurer. Vieux système vieillot dans lequel pour beaucoup nous sommes nés mais qui n'a pas toujours existé et n'existe pas dans certains ailleurs. S'ouvrir à autre chose.

Et puis construire. Dé-construire, re-construire, construire. Construire quoi? Qui? Pour qui? Pourquoi? Pour quoi? Comment? Ribambelles de questions qui nous habitent comme une ribambelle d'angelots se tenant par la main dans les nuages chantonnant.

Construire autre chose. Une, des, mes, -mais- autre chose(s). Fatigué.e.s, fatigant que de sur-vivre dans un système épuisé puisant en chacune de nos ressources comme dans un puit sans fond dont la terre humide sera bientôt sèche. Ecologie fatiguée d'un système épuisé comme d'une courte chronique qui s'en va à se terminer.



Pandemic (ab)normal: notes on life and creation



Most of the work we do is unnecessary.
 Health is not a personal issue but a collective one.
 Home is not a safe space for everyone.
 Not everyone has a home.
 Music vs Virus feat. Djessa da'hil.
 UK Covid-19 trends: baking sourdough bread and clapping on your doorstep for the National Health Service at 8pm every Thursday.
 Kulat kulngit, Bintang bintangit, Kulat di tanah,
 Bintang di langit [Mushrooms on the ground are like stars in the sky].
 In the end, blame and stigma always sticks to those who have already been blamed and stigmatised.
 Life is not possible in a racist, ableist, sexist, ageist and classist societies.
 We have to care for each other, humans, non-humans and the world.
 Lalela
 Mycorrhizal sentiments.
 There will not be herd immunity.
 The state of violence has been an established reality.
 Test. Test. Test.
 We are not working from home, we are at our homes during a crisis trying to work.
 Hetero-patriarchal racist capitalism is not business as usual.
 Life is not possible under global environmental destruction.
 Top tip: taking oregano and lemon with hot water will apparently kill the virus.
 Czechia Covid-19 trends: country re-united sawing face masks; the intricacies of postsocialist patriotic nationalism.
 Disease is an environmental issue.
 We can learn a lot in the forest.
 Isolation is not equal.
 There were never any dolphins.
 Newly popular phrases: unprecedented, lockdown, personal protective equipment, social distancing.
 I miss you.
 Another online yoga class.
 Another online quiz.
 Another online meeting.
 The gendered division of labour: exacerbated.
 Everyone needs shelter and access to clean water.
 I was not scared of dying. I was scared of dying alone.
 Fever dreams.
 Some people will clean their toilet for the first time in their lives.
 There is no environmental justice without social justice.
 How does this end?

Bloodsporting; or, Some Notes on Spectacle in the Age of Quarantine
by cole pulice, april 2020

In the wake of the COVID-19 cancellations worldwide,
all Ultimate Fighting Championship events
will be moved from their original locations--
the largest arenas from around the globe--
to an Undisclosed Private Island,
("the infrastructure is being built right now," the UFC assures),
allowing the UFC to continue staging their combat spectacles
despite the governmental and athletic commission legislation
forbidding it.

an Undisclosed Private Island . . .
hosting competition between the world's
Greatest Fighters:
a narrative straight up lifted from Mortal Kombat,
Or Bloodsport,
(or countless other Jean-Claude Van Damme et al. films),
surrounding mythological/underground/illicit fight-to-the-death tournaments,
the same mythological narratives that the UFC built itself on and around,
and continues to emulate to sell
Pay-Per-Views.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic
WWE's Wrestlemania, UFC events, America's Presidential Debates,
(the lines separating these spectacles continue to become increasingly
blurred)
all took to taking place behind closed doors,
in empty arenas.

Until the Entertainment Industry at large was finally
put on ice;
cancelled (or, "postponed" so ticket vendors
don't need to refund ticket sales to the people who desperately
need their money back),
including all Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) events,
the largest mixed martial arts promotion in the world.

Dana White, the President of the UFC
has made it clear he was determined to continue Business As Usual
despite COVID-19
and to find ways to circumvent these rules,
and did what any True American Business Cowboy
trying to skirt governmental rules and regulations does:



First: Dana set up shop on tribal land,
At the Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino in Lenmoore, CA
On Tachi Yokut tribal land,
in a state otherwise on total lockdown from COVID-19

Since Tachi Palace is on a reservation,
events held there are not beholden to the California State Athletic Commission,
who have ordered the cancellation of all combat sports events;
Nor does Tachi Palace need to abide by the shelter-in-place order
Issued by Gavin Newsom, Governor of California.

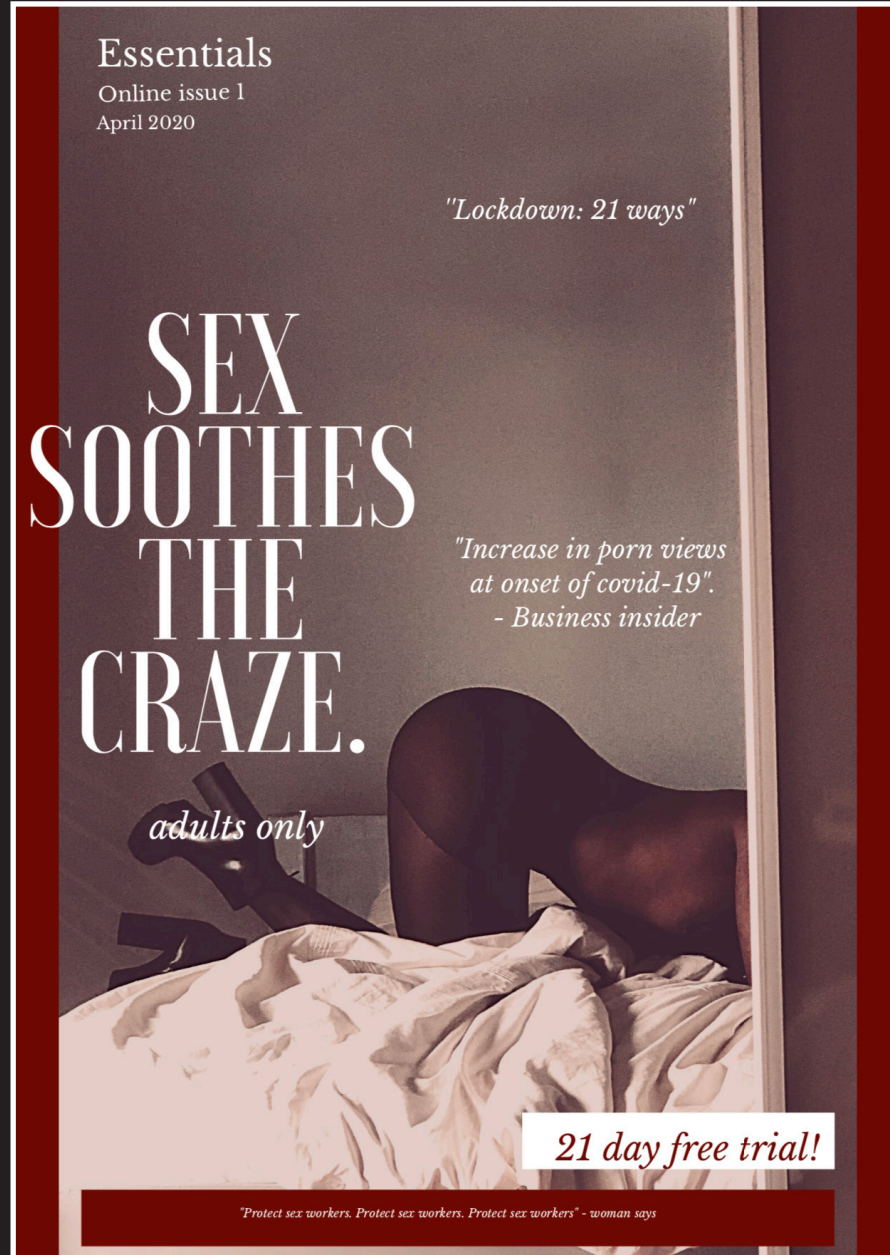
But the deal with Tachi Palace is only secured for around two months, hence:
the Undisclosed Private Island
outside of the jurisdiction of any governing body or athletic commission
virtually all of whom have demanded cancellation of all events.

So Dana White & Co. circumvent
local, national, and global safety regulations
in the name of continuing Business As Usual,
capitalizing on an attention economy that has
otherwise come to a screeching halt

While the details of the dealings between Dana and Tachi Palace are private
something about it stinks;
The UFC buying their way onto a reservation,
using reservation land as a way to bypass
laws and regulations put in place for the safety of the
public at large (what bodies are being put at risk here?)

Something about it all seems painfully "American".

While the seats of the Tachi Palace Arena will
likely be empty when the fight bells ring,
Worldwide Quarantine ensures that
there will be more people at home, ready to Tune In,
than any other event in combat sports history.



The online issue: sex work is work.

This exploration of myself is a mental provocation on sex work, which I have been mentally captured by, and increasingly so at the onset of the pandemic. My project is a social consideration on “natures” of sex work i.e. “how does one become” in an effort to destigmatize sex work and the journey to sex-work.

When I got the invitation to collaborate on the About Time project, I saw it as an intervening space to particularly engage on this matter and contribute to a larger conversation on the decriminalization of sex work.

The Covid-19 pandemic presents a time when most sex workers are left vulnerable in countries like South Africa, where sex work is not decriminalized. Sex workers, whose work involve more physical contact, are affected as their streams of income are impacted due to the 21 day Covid-19 lockdown regulations particular to physical distance and trade. Sex workers are also not allocated institutional relief in South Africa during the covid-19 pandemic, even as they are of the labour groups that need this relief the most.

This visual exploration of my ‘other selves’ or ‘selves in the mirror’ in a fragile world at a rupture as presented by a pandemic, tries to open pathways to empathetic exploration of the lives and journeys of sex workers in South Africa, particularly during a pandemic. The visual presentation hopes to ignite conversations on possibility and empathy in and for sex work, for a push towards decriminalization of sex work in South Africa.

My project is a visual presentation of an online magazine. It features a self-portrait of an image in the mirror, also known as a “mirror selfie” in digital language. When it is brought together with the reality of sex work under 21 day confinement, it comments on the evolution of sex work during this period, natures of becoming a sex worker, and the necessity to take steps toward decriminalisation. The image was taken in exploration of the consideration of my own possibility to perform sex work in a rapidly changing society. It was an exploration of myself and the selves I could become in a “different” or “changing” world.

Au cœur de la pandémie, Déconfinons les possibles...

De l'impérieuse nécessité d'écrire...

Au vu d'une forme d'incertitude tout champ confondu, liée à la situation de pandémie que nous subissons, le temps s'est déployé pour moi, sous le jour d'une impérieuse nécessité d'écrire...

Écrire avec des mots, en images, en actes...

Une nécessité également d'entendre, d'écouter, de recueillir des regards introspectifs, sensibles, analytiques sur cette crise sanitaire que nous traversons. Au delà de la crise, quelles sont les conséquences, les changements sur les modes et les processus de penser, de création, de production, de diffusion de l'art, de la culture, et ce de façon transversale.

Quand est-il de cette immobilité mobile, cet isolement connecté ?

La « ré-invention » de soi et du monde ne relève t-elle pas aussi d'une forme de permanence parfois invisible ?

Je me suis saisie de l'écriture et de l'Autoportrait, que j'avais laissé en suspens il y a bientôt 20 ans, et intuitivement ancrée dans des actes performatifs, car c'était le langage approprié à ce moment-là pour restituer des paroles de femmes oubliées, des paroles d'êtres.

Mon travail se nourrit d'un discours sur la pensée décoloniale. Décoloniser les imaginaires, c'est aussi les déconfiner dans un contexte mondial où il paraît plus que jamais important de ne pas indexer l'Autre, certes, mais de ne pas l'ignorer non plus, sans doute s'agissait-il pour moi de convier les humains à la danse de l'altérité, à l'hymne de la sororité.

Image 1— *Autoportrait en confinement*, photographie, 80 X 80 cm, avril 2020

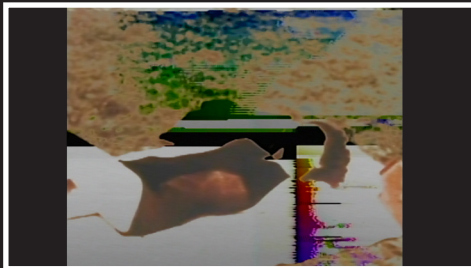
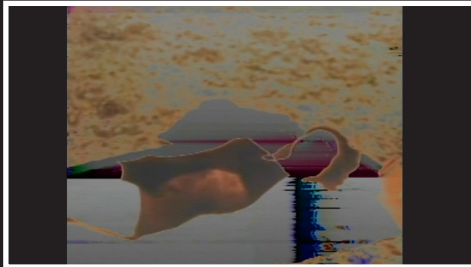
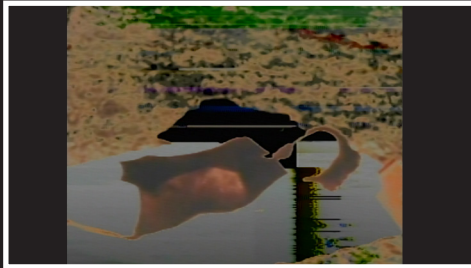
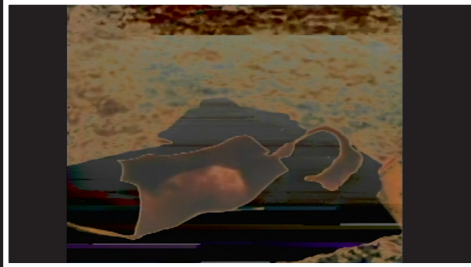
Image 2— *Autoportrait, d'après..* 80 X 80 cm, avril 2020, D'après, *Portrait de Madeleine*, un tableau peint par Marie-Guillémme Benoist en 1800, France. 81 x 65 cm, Département des peintures du musée du Louvre

Image 3— *Autoportrait, D'après des lectures sur l'exotisme et autres toxicités..* Photo, dessin numérique, collage, 80 X 80 cm, avril 2020

Image 4— *Autoportrait*, Photo, dessin numérique, collage, 80 X 80 cm, mai 2020, D'après *un portrait fait de moi*, dans son atelier à Maisons-Alfort par, Pierre Buraglio, Cynthia, dessin, 58cm X 34 cm, 2002, Galerie Hélène Trintignan, © Pierre Buraglio

Image 5— *Autoportrait, D'après, « Mes récits pseudos biographiques »*, photographie numérique, format variable, juin 2020.

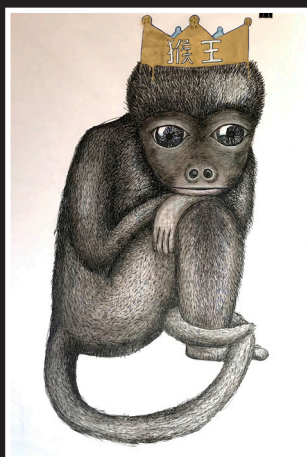
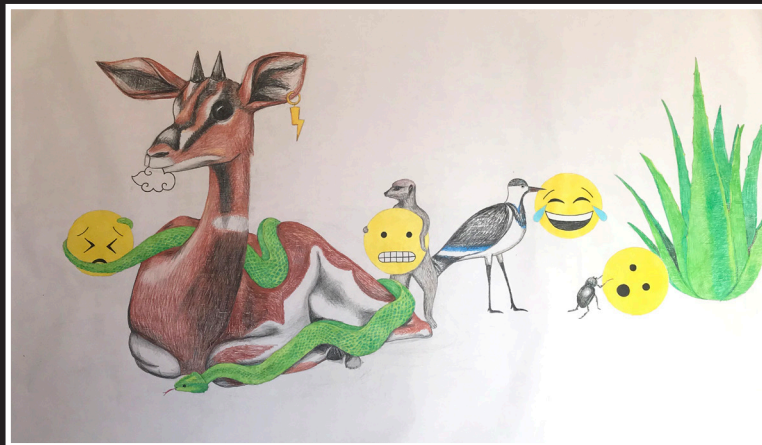




Gaze Study North West South East # 1



Gaze Study North West South East # 2



Dessins animés ?

← Une fois passée la sidération devant les faits et la brutalité du changement, me restait, au fond du cœur, un peu chaque jour, surtout quand je me risquais à l'extérieur, le moins possible, le moins longtemps, le moins loin, le plus à distance des autres, un vieux fond d'angoisse.

→ Une angoisse, pourtant longuement traitée. Elle faisait retour, comme à bas bruit, rythmant avec mollesse le temps infini de ces jours d'arrêt. La course effrénée avait été stoppée net. Je m'étais retrouvé comme un animal de dessin animé, poursuivant dieu sait quelle proie au-dessus du vide, mes jambes en train de mouliner par-dessus l'abysse. Je n'étais pas encore tombé. J'en étais à cette phase étrange : suspendu entre la poursuite du mouvement, la conscience de l'imminence de la chute et l'apparition évidente du ridicule de la scène.

Je continuais donc, même si les cours et le nombre de séances avaient diminué, à faire office de professeur de philosophie et de psychanalyste. J'encourageais les efforts de mes étudiants.E.s. Je répondais aux appels de mes analystes.E.s. Comme à l'accoutumé, d'un côté je parlais, de l'autre, je gardais le silence.

Dans un cas comme dans l'autre, pris par les enchaînements d'une séquence pédagogique (expliquer la biopolitique chez Foucault, relire, corriger 16X9000 signes et demander à chacun.e de bien vouloir les mettre en page, rassurer Eva quant à l'écriture de son mémoire, corriger celui de Corentin, faire un rappel sur le retour à Freud du Lacan structuraliste au prochain cours sur Zoom) ou porté, par l'équivoque signifiante d'un rêve, soulagé, en apprenant que tel patient pensait pouvoir « se remettre à l'heure du monde » après la crise, que telle autre, très fragile, parvenait à continuer de vivre et à supporter ses enfants ; la joie prenait le dessus. Le désir m'animait.

Je savais que j'étais encore capable de me faire humble cheville ouvrière. J'arrivais à transmettre aux autres, à connecter les idées, à poser les questions, à couper les flux suffisamment loin du danger mais assez proche de l'endroit. Bref, de part et d'autre, je continuais de relancer des machines. Deleuze comme Lacan ne m'avaient-ils pas appris à me défaire de l'imaginaire pour faire face au réel ? Tenir devant l'impossible.

Dans ces moments-là, j'assumais la rupture. Je n'avais pas vraiment de théorie sur ce qui était en train de se passer. Celles et ceux avec qui j'interagissais désormais à l'aide d'un écran, non plus. Nous refusions de faire semblant de continuer comme avant, mais nous n'avions pas encore le cran de tout changer. Nous tentions de faire sans la présence et ses équivoques, sans le flou des soupirs et des gestes inaudibles, sans tout ce qui restait en dehors du cadre d'une webcam et qui, jusque-là, avait fait le sel de nos rencontres. Avait-on renoncé pour autant au dire et à ses malentendus ? Certes, les corps et les choses s'étaient comme dilués, absents. Certes, la tension n'était plus palpable. Il nous fallait redoubler d'effort pour tendre nos chairs les un.e.s vers les autres. Mais quand même, parfois, malgré nous, se jouait cette expérience inouïe, ce moment si fort, cette illusion fugace, peut-être, mais jamais sans effets, de s'être mis à nu, d'avoir percé l'autre et ses secrets, d'avoir dissipé avec brièveté les ombres d'un mystère. Puis, mais n'était-ce pas déjà comme cela avant ?, les phrases continuaient de se recouvrir les unes les autres, l'éclair de

vérité retrouvait son épais brouillard, les gouttes de sueurs sur les peaux étaient absorbées par le coton. A présent, cependant, l'après-coup de la rencontre se vivait encore un peu plus seule.

Donc, malgré l'impossibilité de mettre un nom sur le lièvre que j'avais chassé avec tant d'ardeur et de certitudes, malgré la profondeur de l'abîme survolé et la possibilité concrète de l'effondrement, des intensités vivantes, des sursauts de lucidité, des bribes de cohérence affleuraient parfois. Ces moments étaient trop rares.

Les intellectuels se succédaient à la radio, sur les journaux et les réseaux. Comment faisaient-ils ? Chacun mettait des mots, trouvait ses expressions, reprenait et remodelait ses idées. Je n'en trouvais aucune de satisfaisante. Cyniques ou sincères, je n'arrivais à les écouter qu'à moitié. Les journaux me tombaient des mains. Pire, les livres, la lecture, l'écriture, mes armes secrètes depuis toujours, m'avaient déserté. Parviendrais-je encore à formuler une équation avec mes doutes ? Réussirais-je à retrouver l'énergie nécessaire pour souligner, recopier, décrypter, fendre les chapitres, tracer un plan et trembler devant les pages blanches qu'il resterait à noircir ?

Pour l'instant, je n'étais pas encore parvenu à trouver comment sortir de la fadeur des entre-deux. Rien n'y faisait : ni la liste des projets à terminer (deux livres, un roman (?), un collectif sur Foucault, l'article pour le Brésil, l'article pour la revue de psychanalyse en Suisse et tous ceux restés en souffrance faute de temps et qu'on me réclamait depuis trop longtemps : les gens du colloque de Rennes m'avaient rappelé et insistaient pour avoir mon texte); ni les efforts quotidiens pour faire trois fois huit minutes jambes-abdos-bras (est-ce que ce serait assez ? est-ce que ça suffirait pour ne pas trop prendre de ventre ? n'avais-je déjà pas un peu grossi aux vacances de Noël ? pourquoi mon analyse ne m'avait-elle pas permis de mieux lâcher mon narcissisme ? mais, quand même, chauve et gros, non, ça, ce n'était pas possible...); ni le petit balcon avec vue sur jardin; ni les innombrables apéros Skype (finirait-on vraiment alcooliques ? n'avais-je pas toujours eu un terreau fertile ? ne m'étais-je pas promis d'arrêter six mois, au premier avril, comme l'an dernier ?), ni les réunions sur les plateformes interactives où les collègues donnaient l'impression de tellement mieux gérer la crise, leur emploi du temps, leurs enfants et leurs nerfs. Trop longtemps resté bon élève, c'était comme si le maître s'était mis en grève. Il ne m'avait pas donné assez de devoirs à faire. Il m'avait tourné le dos. Il ne corrigerait pas ceux que j'avais réussi à commencer. Je me retrouvais seul pour continuer à apprendre. La bibliothèque bien sûr était là. Sur Facebook, les adresses de liens à télécharger pour enfin disposer des œuvres complètes de Hegel-Saussure-Stiegler-Spinoza-Rancière-Lyotard-Esposito-Castoriadis... s'étaient multipliés, j'avais tout téléchargé : pour après.

Le drame du bon élève est d'espérer l'autorisation. Il reste immobile. Paralysé de ne pas savoir s'il peut, si c'est bien ça qu'il fallait, s'il n'aurait pas mieux valu faire autrement. Dans l'attente, faute de consigne, il plonge dans le néant.

« Les cahiers au feu et les maîtres au milieu », chantait-on à l'arrivée des vacances d'été. Mais ces vacances-ci étaient inattendues. On ne les avait pas désirées. On n'avait pas fait le décompte des jours. L'accès à la salle de classe avait été interdit d'un coup. Les cahiers et les manuels y étaient restés coincés. A la place de nous emmener vers les plages, on était resté avec la sensation de ne pas y avoir

droit, de ne pas pouvoir s'en réjouir. Vivre ce temps comme un dolce farniente, c'était accepter son statut de privilégié. Le mettre à profit pour boucler, tout ce qu'on n'arrivait pas à finir, c'était pareil : être renvoyé à la condition vers laquelle tous nos efforts avaient tendu jusque-là, un travail, un salaire, de l'espace, trois pièces et une terrasse, dans un quartier en pleine gentrification, pour un loyer exorbitant, mais, au fond, nous étions deux et sans enfant...

A quel prix ? Au détriment de qui et de quoi ? De quel droit ? Il n'avait pas fallu attendre la crise pour éprouver la honte d'être ce que l'on est. Mais, aujourd'hui, celle-ci s'imposait avec une ardeur nouvelle. Cette réclusion au consentement forcé mettait en scène, et avec éclat, la comédie que nous avions accepté de jouer en secret. Elle montrait du doigt notre chance écœurante et la débauche d'oppressions dont elle dépendait. Elle officialisait les jouissances clandestines. Elle justifiait les innovations, les progrès, les avancées technologiques, la 4G, le haut débit et l'achat du dernier Mac. Elle nous gardait en bonne santé. Même ma mère et ses innombrables amies, nonobstant leur petit penchant à virer complotistes, se portaient comme un charme.

Alors ? Fallait-il plaider les lendemains qui chantent ? Succomber aux affres de la dépression ? Briguer les pires catastrophismes ? Sombrier dans le cynisme ? Attendre pour voir ? Se taire ?

Comment prendre part ? Comment partager, penser, lutter et vivre ? Je ne pouvais me résoudre à ce qu'il n'y ait pas un avant et un après : tant d'un point de vue subjectif que collectif, nos manières d'aimer, d'être ensemble, de souffrir se devaient d'être interrogées. Je voulais les disséquer, les éviscérer. La banalité aujourd'hui disparue ne ferait sans doute pas retour. Il me fallait trouver la force de traquer les changements sans me laisser submerger par la pesanteur de ce vieux fond d'angoisse. Par le passé, il m'était arrivé de comprendre qu'il recelait aussi du désir.

L'un confine avec l'autre.

Pour l'heure, on ne pouvait pas connaître les formes du dessin à venir. Les contours mettraient du temps à s'affirmer. L'épreuve se situait d'abord là : accepter l'étendue de l'inconnue, la nécessité du changement et la probabilité de ne plus pouvoir se reconnaître. Même après l'écrasement, le protagoniste du dessin animé, qu'il soit en morceaux ou aplati, finissait toujours par réapparaître à l'écran : on nous avait menti depuis qu'on était petit.

« IL EST DES PERTES QUI CONFÈRENT À L' ME UNE SUBLIMITÉ OÙ ELLE S'ABSTIENT DE SE LAMENTER ET S'EN VA EN SILENCE, COMME SOUS DE HAUTS CYPRÈS NOIRS. » Frédéric Nietzsche, *Aurore*, p.288.



Collective Freedom in the Age of Advanced Cultural Industrialization

→ In an era epitomised by material accumulation and systemic destitution of cultural values, the contradiction that is faced by black collective self-determination today is a challenging one. There is both the dire need for dignifying and safe material conditions of existence coupled with the lure of monetary wealth. The belief is that if materialistic desire and wealth are placed in the hands of the right people they could potentially be used to change the structures of white supremacy once and for all. However, today we find that this is not the case. And in fact, these ingredients are far removed from providing the spiritual sustenance required to produce and actualise conditions of freedom. Instead what we find is that the formation of emancipatory assemblages and collective efforts towards self-determination are tightly constrained by the rules of capitalism. Capitalism imposes an ethic of material accumulation on the people by disguising itself as a vector of emancipation. Furthermore, the infliction of harmful technologies by the global capitalist system is a deliberate move to ensure that artistic and cultural freedoms remain dormant. It is an outright tactic to reduce collective human agency. These destructive technologies are manifold and act through a range of pernicious modalities to deter any acts of emancipatory cultural agency from taking root. Consequently, these technologies ensure that a radicalized collective uprising is not released into the world, and act efficiently to exhaust the energies of the repressed masses by freezing them in a socio-cryonic capsule of estrangement.

Alienation, being the potent force that it is, snuffs out sparks that ignite images of a profound cultural revolt from the minds of people, in effect curbing the efforts of a cultural resistance against the systematic annihilation of independent expression of human life. Alienation, in other words, unsettles lived ontologies of being and any other currents that could bring about collective emancipation. This phenomenon can be seen clearly in the sustained erosion of human freedoms and black collective self-determination in particular. The life of the contemporary artist-producer presents itself as an apt representation of this reality of the decline of liberties. Capitalism is targeting the psychic and spiritual faculties of the artist-producer in various ways. One way that it does this is to pull artist-producers into a binding paradox. In this dilemma, the autonomy and positionality of the artist-producer as a self-determining person and member of the collective human body are troubled. This conflict raises the important point of how maintaining authority over one's own artistic and cultural labour is indeed a lived practice, and one in which artist-producers have to be prepared to constantly fight for. In this age of advanced industrialized capitalism, the artist-producer is torn between the increased instrumentalization of their labour and maintaining their artistic freedom. And yet, it is through their agency that they will be able to transcend mere servitude to the system. This Janus-faced reality certainly opens up a line of questioning into the constitution of artistic and cultural freedoms and what happens when these are at stake.

If the life of the artist-producer is meant to be the harbinger of freedom, or at least bring us closer to an ideal state of it, what do we make of what the artist produces in this era of material reproduction? And, what else do we make of transcendent artistic and cultural practices when their material and commercial values are the main factors determining their artistic power? In our contemporary world, what we see at play is class opportunism and materialism rather than collective aspirations towards freedom. The symbolic structures of black cultural production are being dismantled and recreated anew by the logic of the neoliberal cultural marketplace. This process occurs when black artist-producers are encouraged to aspire primarily towards the upliftment of the solitary individual. The damage that this ethic has on common imaginaries forming in the periphery is currently unknown. In the midst of this devastation of black art and cultural production, there lies the possibility for a reconstruction of blackness to be imagined. Certainly if black culture is being co-opted by the system, the people who advocate for its sovereignty, should fight for it. There is a huge need for the images and discourses of black culture fed to us through the racist logic of the capitulo-centric contemporary art and cultural market to be deconstructed. It seems to be serving the market to portray blackness as this essentialised category of being, and this is the case despite the variations of blackness that are portrayed to us in the visual cultures produced by black cultural and artistic practitioners. Market forces are still hard at work to ensure that black culture is still seen to be homogenous, notwithstanding the various multiplicities in which it manifests itself in and around the world. The creation of an elite black upper class and its uncritical acceptance of its role is a problematic aspect maintaining the already racist structure of capitalism. This is one channel introduced by the capitalist system in an effort to preserve itself by yet again pitting black bodies against each other. We are left with a scenario where we have an elite black upper class addicted to a materialist ethic, who are then made the custodians of black cultural production. It begs the question, how do the people who determine the value of black culture benefit from its current articulation in the domains of the media and visual culture in general?

Thinking through the predatory strategy of the cultural sphere today, it is important to re-center the body of the artist-producer that is usually used as the primary locus of marketing expropriation. In the contemporary art world, a trend has quietly imposed its pervasive strategy: the rush to be the first to discover artists. Just as colonizers “discovered” lands and people that they estimated free to rule and conquer, the art collector, valuator, investor is rushing to art fairs to discover the untouched and virgin land of “new” artists. The dominant strategy of the often wealthy (heterosexual white male) person is to speculate on the artwork by advertising the “new” body of the artist, through attaching and building a narrative that is going to offer the most marketable value to the work. What is usually “discovered” is the artist, who then quickly becomes a financial investment opportunity in the eye of the buyer. The capitalist performing such an act of discovery and acquisition mimics the ways of settler colonialism and its various forms of assault on indigenous bodies and native lands. It is such a procedure of predatory discovery that reaffirms the cultural supremacy of the ones in charge of betting on the next artist, that determines who receives

the next resources to gain the financial upper hand. In this game of capital, these marketing strategies are the scars of European conquest and supremacy that stretch over centuries, and are still visible in the expression of black culture today. This is no surprise, since capital still dictates who gets to frame discourse around black culture.

The technologies of capital accumulation still rest in the hands of the same groups of people who have historically harboured extraordinary biases about black people in the world. The people who get to legitimate what gets converted into commodifiable black culture are oftentimes the same ones standing in the way of its fullest expression. This makes sense in understanding how the prowess of their cultural and economic capital keeps them addicted to an image of an impoverished and suffering black culture. In these times, every aspect of human life is in one way or another entangled in the modes of capitalist accumulation. This reality poses a very solemn threat to the vital expression of the singularity of the human being, and the artist-producer's life is the very last frontier of this war on human agency. In this way, the autonomy of the artist is taken from them, leaving no hope for the rest of cultural emancipation, as it will no longer be found in the reservoirs of imagination that give breath to the life of the artist-producer. The encounter between the investor and the artist-producer is not an equal one, and it implies that one can exchange money for the labor of a body, its soul, its spirit, and its imaginary power to transform the real. However, financial and material domination maintain such unequal and unidirectional currents of exchange that it prevents mutual understanding and promotion of the work. It is oftentimes the dehumanizing institutions of the art-world that need to be fought against, if the violence is not to be perpetuated any further.

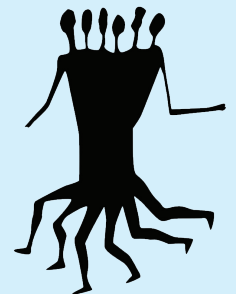
“Since their inception in the nineteenth century, museums have literalized the theatricality of colonialism” (Taylor, 66). This is true to the world of art at large, where a specific performance of cultural difference is required from the artist-producer, so as to be seen, valued, and ultimately made into a commodity. Along these lines, another question arises: what happens to the cultural and aesthetic labor of artistic production when it gets absorbed and inserted into cultural institutions that generate and reproduce alienation? The assaultive nature of capitalist supremacy hasn't stopped at the doors of the institutions of the art-world. In the museum setting, a very specific scopic regime is deployed that promotes the uncritical consumption of a particular form of aesthetics. The generally white and privileged museum-goer is invited to enter a realm constructed for soothing cultural experiences. Within the safety of the institution, culture is given to him or her as a service that he or she has paid for in order to gain some form of cultural capital that can then be invested in social settings. Through money, a form of cultural capital is safely gained that has replaced the lived experience of an aesthetic temporality, which might have challenged the very singular position of the viewer entering the space. The viewer's experience of sensory stimuli depends largely on whether the viewer experiences them inside or outside the walls of the institution. Performance within the museum can sometimes offer critical insights and often stands as a powerful tool to interrogate and confront the reproduction of a certain form of alienation. One thinks of Fred Wilson's *My Life as a Dog* (Whitney Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991), which

denounced the invisibility of black bodies and black labour within the institution. Invited as part of the Whitney's program for visiting artists to give tours of its exhibitions, African American artist Fred Wilson changed into the uniform of a museum guard and was completely ignored by his audience until he started to address them. Through Wilson's performance, the viewer is forced to investigate their own privileged position. Most often, very little is done to provide a sense of history and genealogy that could unsettle the viewer's positionality. Institutions such as the District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in the State of Alabama in the United States have encouraged the self-reflexivity of their viewer's own positionality. This kind of reflexive invitation, encouraged by the curatorial choices of the museum, is one that continues beyond the walls of the institution. The museum should become a transformative as opposed to a consumerist space.

The body of the artist-producer is not a scripted one belonging to a discourse shaped by fashion trends and marketing strategies. Nor should this body be the target of viewers seeking to gain cultural capital in exchange for money. The body belongs to its own cultural genealogy and the myriad of complex and ambivalent impulses that create its singular modes of existence. The life of the artist-producer is not a commodity whose destiny is to be bought and sold. We must remain vigilant against the system of neo-liberal cultural production and its tendency to devour collective solidarities and their cultural symbols. This tendency destroys these symbols' meanings and disrupts the organism of culture until there is no more life for it to grow. The value of black artistic and cultural reproduction and the aesthetic traditions that they engender have to be protected and ethically promoted. We should return our focus to cultural genealogy, which links together a society with its history. More importantly, perhaps, cultural genealogy is what allows people to belong to the collective power of change. This common strength grounded in culture is what people share, care about, and are empowered by in the long legacy of knowledge built and reinvented in active togetherness. Without access to such cultural genealogy, the spine of a society will no longer hold and its members will be too weak to come together. In the realm of arts and culture, to realise the dream of a strong ethos of black self-determination should not be so much about individual pursuits and separate successes. On the contrary, collective self-determination should be about empowering first and foremost the social and the commons. It is only through collective access to a cultural genealogy and history that the individual can thrive in the present and persevere in the future. It is for this reason that we claim that collective black emancipation should come first.

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 Diana Taylor, "Scenarios of Discovery: Reflections on Performance and Ethnography" in *The Archive and the Repertoire*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, pp. 53-78
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Creativity under Confinement

Créativité sous Confinement

Edited by Anaïs Nony and Phokeng Setai

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